

Graduate School of Business

Customer focus: Enacted premise and received practice

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To Michael, Bonnie and Joshua

Future critical inquiring minds

ABSTRACT

This study crafts a schema for understanding the relationship between what organisations say they do and the way they operationalise what they think: the premise-to-received practice. The study navigates its way through an exhaustive volume of relevant work on organisation and organising. The case is argued for adoption of the symbolic interpretive paradigmatic perspective. It is particularly suitable for investigating enacted premise and received practice contexts. A research design is applied in putting these paradigmatic assumptions into motion. The study reports on interpretations emerging from analysis of 'lived experiences' from the two organisational contexts under investigation.

A focus for the study was the Public Sector (Western Australia) reform strategy, known as 'customer focus'. The study's title 'Customer Focus: Enacted premise and received practice', locates interest in the relationship between organisational intentions and actions using customer focus as the lens for grounding organisational experiences. This study investigates the apparent reified social construct of organisation through a customer focus lens.

Similar studies have focused on interpretation schemata in order to understand key organisational events that support the methodology and assumptions used in this study. Such studies owe allegiance to the constructivist ontology, based on the belief of the existence of multiple realities whereby the research act is epistemologically interpretive, aimed at generating understanding.

Following the tenets of constructivist and interpretive knowledge, a qualitative methodology was used. Viewing organising as explicitly communicative, the research strategy adopted a symbolic interpretive theoretical perspective. Consistent with hermeneutics and grounded theory principles (not methods), the study sought further understanding of the relationship between organisational intentions and actions. The research design emphasised an interpretive approach by eliciting data from individual points of view within the work setting. A sample of six organisations was selected, and sixty-one interviews were conducted. Focus interviews were conducted with Top Management Teams. Individual interviews were conducted with Workers.

Two sets of meanings were construed. One, Top Management Teams, enacted *involvement, commitment, communication* and *relationships*. This was related to Top Management Teams practice of control. The other, Workers, enacted the same

meanings in the customer focus strategy, *involvement, commitment, communication* and *relationships*. This was related to Workers received practice of equivocality.

This study reports on two major findings. First, there was harmony in the enacted thinking on the meaning for customer focus across Top Management Teams and Workers. Second, the harmony in the enacted thinking on the meanings for customer focus across the two groups were discordant with the way respondents operationalise what they report they think. Top Management Teams were unaware of the discord between the way they say they think (*involvement, commitment, communication* and *relationships*) and the way they operationalise what they think (practices of control). The discord between premise and practice in Top Management Teams was received in practice by Workers as equivocality. Equivocality emerged as discordant with Worker premise taken for customer focus as meaning to create shared understanding.

The study emerged a non-alignment between what organisations say they do (Top Management Team enacted premise) and the way they operationalise what they think (Worker received practice).

GLOSSARY OF KEY CONCEPTS

Culture	Context for meaning making and interpretation.
Enacted Premise	Spoken metaphors developed from relational assumptions and meanings, derived in and through interaction. The way people say they think.
Interpretation	The process through which information [organisational experiences including communication] is given meaning and actions taken.
Interpretation system	Inter-subjectively negotiated framework for understanding.
Metaphor	A sense of paradox and the absurd, which invites the user to think about themselves or their situations in ways that are imaginative.
Paradigm	The manner in which individuals perceive the world which, in turn, guides action taken.
Practice	The way people operationalise what they think.
Premise-to-receive practice	A schema that represents the way meaning is created (enacted premise) and recreated in the received practice.
Received practice	A context created through individuals' interpretations enacted through interaction on premise and practice.

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CHAPTER 1: THE STUDY

Introduction

This study is conducted within the Western Australian Public Sector domain. It is centrally concerned with a change intervention labeled as *'customer focus'. This intervention is common to Public Sector Agencies in Australia. Customer focus implies a pre-customer focus culture of visualising and dealing with people who have been known at various times as supplicants, 'the public' and clients. The impacts made on a change policy as it journeys through the 'constructed realities' or interpretations of the policy by policy makers, managers, and employees, can have a significant bearing on what becomes the 'policy in-use' or the 'change in practice'. This study's interest is in investigating how a customer focus strategy has translated into meanings and action by the key stakeholders responsible for its administration.

Customer focus is the innovation under investigation. A sociological approach has been taken. From the perspective of the policy designers, customer focus is embedded with meanings that assumes a level of shared understanding at two levels. The Top Management Teams first receive the customer focus strategy. To this, it is argued, Top Management Team members have applied their own meaning as they disseminated customer focus within their organisations. The recipients of the reinterpreted customer focus were public service "Workers". These two groups were targeted to examine, in depth and interpretively, meanings construed within the enacted premise-to-received practice relationship.

Often it is heard in workplaces that 'things are constantly changing'. Such thoughts provoke the question as to whether change is a feature of contemporary organisational life or whether the term signals discernible meanings for members within a particular social group.

The notion of 'change', as spoken of in organisations, can plausibly be conceived as metaphor. The issue then arises as to images that the metaphor conveys. Change may be a shorthand way of signifying rational, controlled, and purposive

* Conventions used in this study

' draw reader's attention to points of significance.

" signify direct quotes from the literature.

[] signify author's addition.

organisational action. Burnes (1992) captures the essence of the change as control metaphor by advocating realignment in an organisation's structures and functions. Alternatively, change as a socially negotiated construct could be the chosen metaphor. Here, competing notions such as rational and irrational, and supportive and contradictory, are negotiated in terms of the meanings they hold. Berg (1985:283) captures the sense of this metaphor in terms of a "symbolic transformation process whereby the form and/or content of a symbolic field is altered". These differing views of change illustrate how the way in which individuals perceive the world creates different ways of thinking and acting. The theme in Chapter one is to articulate a 'frame' for investigating the interactive relationship between espoused innovations or changes (enacted premises), and those received in practice.

Bounding the terrain

The adage of 'do as I say, not as I do' is not new. The adage is based on observations (including data collected through interview or written word) of inconsistencies between what people say and do. Obloj and Davis (1991:336), for example, conclude from a study on the behaviour of 30 association managers in Poland's fresh fruit and vegetables industry that "when faced with the non-programmed difficult and other threatening situations created by reforms, managers do not act congruently with their espoused theory, but rather with their short term, muddling through theories-in-use". In other words, explanations for organisational phenomena are made on the basis of observed behaviours and actions. Embedding this notion within a view of organisation as culture, differences between words and actions are conceptualised in terms of the discord between the way people say they think (enacted premise) and the way they operationalise what they think (practice).

In adopting culture as metaphor for something that an organisation "*is*" (Smircich, 1983a:353) (as opposed to behaviours), action becomes understandable in terms of cognition, symbols or unconscious processes (Smircich and Calás, 1987:233). From the "constructivist perspective" (Schwandt, 1994:118), the apparent discord between what people say and the way they operationalise what they think, is itself a constructed 'reality'; negotiated between observer and observed. In research, the way individuals perceive the world (not an independently existing, 'out there' reality) and the role individuals play within it, are deemed to be intersubjective 'realities'.

The notion of meaning making enriches the subjective view of 'reality' by assuming organising to be possible only "on the basis of some sense of collective understanding" (Gioia, 1986:51). Daft and Weick (1984:294) term this interpretation: "the process through which information [organisational experiences including communication] is given meaning and actions taken". From Weick's (1969) 'enactment' perspective, meaning making and action taken are two reciprocal processes.

This study furthers the notion of premise and practiced contexts by positing a third notion: 'the received practice'. The received practice presents a further context of meaning making and interpretation. It also consists of the processes of what people think based upon a lens of 'meaning'. More specifically, the interpretive thrust of the received practice context is to explain the processes of how individuals translate events. Isabella (1990:9) terms this, "a type of framework for understanding". In other words, the received practice context of meaning represents a state of reflection of the mind, where uncertain events (enacted premise) are assimilated into the existing organisational structure (practiced contexts). Harris and Ogbonna (1998:78) suggest that those on the receiving end of change strategies (Workers) remains an under researched area of academic inquiry. The conceptualisation of received practice addresses this imbalance.

The received practice context is resonant with what Weick and Bougon (2001) term "cause maps". In Weick and Bougon's (2001:327) view, cause maps are both guides and products. It is the guide sense used here.

"Because maps relate an uncertain event to existing concepts, they generate meaning for the event. Maps are also products in the sense that concepts change in order to accommodate new experience".

The received practice context is conceived as a guide rather than a product. Its benefit lies in explaining organisational experiences and the relations used by individuals to understand them. Weick and Bougon (2001:312) explain this in processual terms:

"A cause map develops as the mind reflects on experience, constructs concepts in the form of variables, and imposes connections among these variables. When variables are connected, they become meaningful since meaning flows from relationships. Thus, the more equivocality the

individual can remove from experience by means of concepts-structures, the more the world will make sense to that person, and the more productive that person can be".

Herein lies the premise for distinguishing the received practice context from the notion of cause maps. In this study the notion of cause maps is as an "epistemological structure" in its own right (Weick and Bougon, 2001:312). The positioning of the received practice is deliberate in that it supports Weick's (1969) 'enactment' perspective to the extent that action takes precedence over cognition. More specifically, this study emphasises the extent to which reality is interpersonally negotiated. A more detailed breakdown of this set of ideas follows in this Chapter.

This study posits organising as a "social construction, symbolically constituted and reproduced through interaction" (Smircich, 1985:58). The customer focus strategy is a lens into understanding the organisational meaning making and interpretation processes. The study investigates the alignment between the premise and received practice contexts by addressing the following research questions.

Research questions

This study seeks answers to the following questions.

- i) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Top Management Team enacted premise?
- ii) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Worker received practice?
- iii) What is the alignment in meanings between the enacted premise and received practice contexts?
- iv) What understandings emerge from the study to assist concerned change agents interested in aligning organisational intentions and actions?

Research objectives

The research questions were explored through the following research objectives.

- i) To extract from the literature, both sociological and methodological, working constructs of customer focus related relationships.
- ii) To gather qualitative data based on emerging constructs from the sample Top Management Teams.
- iii) To gather qualitative data based on emerging constructs from the sample Workers.
- iv) To compare and contrast symbolic interpretations from the two sample groups.
- v) To report on emerging constructs and models that reflect alignment as in the research questions.

Rationale for research questions and objectives

Since the 1980's, which saw a paradigmatic shift from efficiency and compliance to competitiveness and profitability, the Australian Public Sector has been undergoing fundamental transition. "The pressures for globalisation of the Australian economy in the late 1980's and early 1990's highlighted the need to ensure the Australian economy was as competitive as possible. This raised the need to re-examine the approach to competition policy across Australia" (Nolan, 1996:1).

During 1991 the Australian governments agreed to examine a national approach to competition policy (Harman and Harman, 1996:12). The foundations for the policy were provided by the Hilmer Report (1993), with final agreement on the policy achieved following a meeting of the Council of Australian Government in April 1995. The policy "extended the scope of trade practices legislation to encompass the public sector and professions, modernised policy in the areas of pricing and access powers, and was intended to revitalise the micro-economic reform agenda. The intended result was an integrated national economy, more uniform and consistent business regulation across the country and improved levels of competitiveness" (Harman and Harman, 1996:12).

While Hilmer (1993) was laying the foundations for competition policy nationally, at the state level the Western Australian Government had, itself, commissioned a review into public sector finances, known as the McCarrey Report (1993a).

McCarrey, like Hilmer, was concerned with competitiveness, however the focus of the review findings were on "greater involvement of the private sector in service delivery and in the processes of government" (McCarrey, 1993b:1). Schapper (1995:6), the then Chief Executive of the Western Australian Public Sector Management Office, described the McCarrey model as broader in focus than Hilmer in the sense that McCarrey adopted the notion of "service provision" to be opened to competition as opposed to Hilmer's interest with "government business enterprises".

In short, McCarrey (1993b:29) was concerned with contestability of government service delivery through competitive tendering and contracting processes.

"The objective of competitive tendering is to improve efficiency in government agencies, leading to the same level of service at lower costs or improved services at the same cost. The harnessing of competition encourages tenderers to find more flexible and creative ways of delivering services".

Underpinning the McCarrey Report (1993a) was a 'new paradigm' reform of customer focus to the delivery of government services and products. During 1994, a customer focus program was launched for the Premier by the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO) to "ensure that the entire Western Australian public sector continuously works to improve the level of customer service required to enhance service delivery, and to provide a value for money service for the community" (PSMO, 1996). PSMO is a central government agency responsible for the setting of administrative policy and standards for the Western Australian public service. Western Australia is a significant State in Australia, contributing 26.3 per cent of the value of Australia's total exports for 1997/98 (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 1998).

PSMO realised its customer focus paradigm through a program of change. The program was developed as a three year initiative, to be a key element of the government's change agenda (PSMO, 1996).

Underpinning the customer focus strategic development has been a requirement for public sector agencies to demonstrate commitment by way of integrating customer focus objectives into strategic and operational plans and taking steps to develop the required cultural and process changes. On the one hand, if customer focus is perceived as an add-on luxury or something individuals do when they have time (a

'compliance' approach), agencies will probably experience early implementation failure. On the other hand, commitment to customer focus implies the innovation has become buried as a deeply held 'value' by members of the organisation. Customer focus will be internalised as the new way of 'seeing'.

Assumptions, interpretations and actions

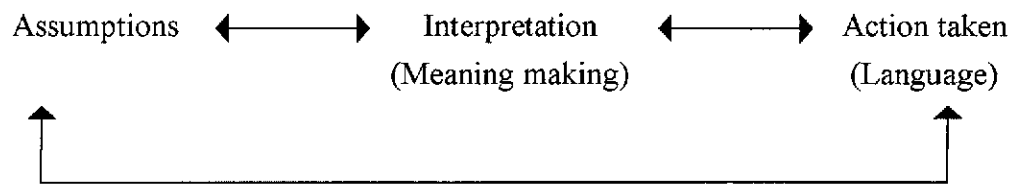
A seductive theme emerging from the literature suggests that the manner in which organisational phenomena are viewed affects how the said phenomena are studied (Morgan, 1997; Whiteley, 1995; Schein, 1991; Isabella, 1990; Krone, *et al*, 1987; Smircich, 1983a). In other words, "the frames of reference or perspective through which people view an event" (Isabella, 1990:8) influence how individuals study organisational phenomena. Various models are proposed in furthering understanding on organisational experiences. Smircich (1983a:340), for example, distinguishes different ideas on organisation on the basis of two dimensions:

- "the ontological status of social reality - the objective-subjective question; and
- assumptions about human nature - the determinist-voluntarist question".

Accordingly, individuals who hold different views on these dimensions, knowingly or otherwise, approach the phenomenon of organisation in fundamentally different ways. In other words, assumptions are argued to influence social action (Schein, 1991; Isabella, 1990). Gioia (1986:51) thickens the argument by positing that "meaning created influences action taken".

Based on the above, it is asserted that assumptions and the processes of meaning creation (interpretation) are relational phenomena that collectively influence action taken. Due to its reciprocal nature, action taken is viewed as influencing assumptions and the processes of meaning creation. This applies to the more surface artifacts of organisational experience, such as language. This view is supported by Donnellon (1986:136) who posits language as "a behavioural indicator of cognition, as social action, and as context for subsequent behaviour". This relationship is depicted in Figure 1.1.

FIGURE 1.1: Relational Nature between Assumptions, Interpretation and Action Taken



Source: Adapted from Weick (1969), Daft and Weick, (1984) and Gioia (1986).

Locating interpretation processes

Framing organisation in cultural terms as "cognitive enterprises" (Argyris and Schön, 1978) conceptualises organising through processes of shared interpretation. From this epistemological stance, "culture consists of shared knowledge, that is, a system of meanings that accompanies the behaviours and practices of a particular group" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:239). Smircich and Calás' (1987:240) notion of culture is based on the assumption that the "semantic fields of language contain the natives' worldview and that what people do is related to what they think". Language is seen as the route to thought patterns that are maintained through communication, or in other words, through interaction. Heller (et al, 1998:69) supports this premise by conceptualising organisation in terms of "forms of interaction".

In a similar vein to Smircich and Calás (1987), Donnellon (1986:136) accentuates cognitions as the site for meaning making and interpretation in what she terms "social cognition". Based on the works of Piaget (1954) and Vygotsky (1978), she argues that cognitions develop primarily through our communication with others. Donnellon (1986:138) puts it in the following way.

"Because of our social nature, we develop codes for communication of our cognitions and feelings. That is, we have constructed conventionalised rules for the display of our own thoughts and for the interpretation and influence of those of others through our language and communication".

Implicit in Donnellon's view is the notion of meaning making and interpretation (cognitive processes) as occurring in the minds of individuals. In other words, meaning making and interpretation is assumed to take place within individual cognitions. In Weick and Bougon (2001:308) terms, "organisations exist largely in the mind and their existence takes the form of cognitive maps ... what ties and organisation together is what ties thoughts together". Others, including Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996), Dachler and Hosking (1995), and Rose (1988), adopt a

relational view of meaning making and interpretation. From this perspective "meaning making is a shared and public activity, not something that occurs in the private recesses of the mind" (Rose, 1988:358). In other words, the locus of meaning making is in individuals' relatedness with one another.

Smircich (1983a), on tracing the way culture has been developed in organisational discourse, proposes two main cultural themes. Culture as:

- a critical variable; and
- root metaphor.

Smircich (1983a:339) asserts that "differences in approach to the organisation-culture relationship are derived from differences in the basic assumptions that researchers make about both 'organisation' and 'culture' ... the task of evaluating the power and limitations of the concept of culture must be conducted within this assumption context". A different assumptive context is distilled by Isabella (1990). Isabella (1990:8) argues that a cognitive basis for explaining organisational phenomena requires "understanding interpretation and interpretive phenomena". She aligns studies on interpretations into two distinctive themes, which she terms:

- cognitive theory research - which investigate structural properties of interpretations; and
- cognitive logic research - which investigates organisational collective viewpoints on organisational occurrences.

While cognitive theory research is concerned with the structural properties associated with interpretations, cognitive logic research is concerned with "similarities in points of view or construed realities, that guide the attribution of meaning and significance to specific organisational events" (Isabella, 1990:9). Taking meaning as essentially a socially constructed phenomenon, interpretation is the "inter-subjectively negotiated framework for understanding" (Gioia and Thomas, 1996). Put in another way, "interpretation is not defined as imposing structure but as translating events and developing frameworks for understanding" (Isabella, 1990:9). The essence of Isabella's (1990), and Gioia and Thomas' (1996) view is the idea of a merger between structure and process. This is a foundation point of interest for this study in arguing a context frame of reference for understanding premise-to-received practice organisational experiences, which is further explored. The point at hand is that the

locus where meaning making is held is one further frame which requires attention in examining the research context and findings.

Interpretation as a means to frame thinking in-use

In reviewing organisation discourse, many contemporary authors use assumptions in a taken-for-granted like manner. This has been commented on in published reports elsewhere, including Morgan (1997), Barley and Kunda (1992), and Burrell and Morgan (1979). The premise of assumptions as a trustworthy means to characterise discourse on organisation can be plausibly extended to actual discourse in practice. In other words, discourse in practice can be characterised by the assumptions interpreted from organisational members' language in-use.

Following a thorough review and synthesis of the organisational culture literature, Detert (et al, 2000: 850) argue that the relationship between culture and the implementation of new behaviours and practices has not been adequately explored. They suggest a need for research and theory developments aimed at understanding the gaps between culture that is espoused by certain organisational members and the one that actually describes the artifacts and behaviours visible throughout the organisation.

Isabella (1990:7) points out, "while many studies have elaborated upon the concrete and observable behaviours and actions connected with change, few have tried to identify and understand the interpretations and cognitions associated with them". Silverman (1970:126) expresses a stronger conviction by asserting that "action arises out of meanings which define social reality ... By concentrating on the behaviour itself, it is possible to miss totally its significance to the people involved and, therefore, to be able to predict with any accuracy the way in which those at whom it is directed will react to it".

Building upon Isabella's (1990) and Silverman's (1970) assertions, this study asserts that few studies have tried to identify the interpretations and symbolic meanings associated with the concrete and observable behaviours and actions connected with change. This study takes up this idea by investigating the interpretations and symbolic meanings of language (as a type of action) associated with a customer focus strategy (as a form of organisational change) through a symbolic interpretive lens.

It is necessary therefore to ground a framework for understanding premise-to-received practice phenomena from the symbolic interpretive perspective.

Enacted premise and practice as contexts for meaning making and interpretation

Adoption of customer focus, as with any new organisational strategy, implies a need to understand the prevailing organisation cognition and interpretive processes (Gioia and Thomas, 1996; Isabella, 1990; Ford and Baucus, 1987; Berg, 1986; Daft and Weick, 1984). The question arises, however, as to whether shifts in assumptions become buried and internalised by members of the organisation. Alternatively, customer focus may manifest as more surface thoughts of 'what ought to be'. For example, Finney and Mitroff (1986:318) assert that "while the environment and its uncertainty pose considerable threat to an organisation's espoused strategy, it may be that internal barriers pose more immediate and critical threats to a strategic plan's [customer charter's] success". Such threats include the danger that assumptions might continue to be made and accepted at a surface level with no shift in the collective sense for understanding.

Based upon arguments in the literature, it is plausible to consider respondents' comments of an 'ought to be' nature as representing their enacted values. Again, represented by the literature, what organisations are seen to 'do' represent practice. Premise and practice are construed as contexts for identifying "similarities in points of view, or construed realities, that guide the attribution of meaning and significance" (Isabella, 1990:9). Masuch (1985:14) makes the point with his notion of "vicious circles", that "individuals act with some degree of purpose, yet the sum total of their interactions are often at variance with their intentions ... Frequently social systems display regularities that make little sense in terms of individual intentions". In short, the organisational discourse is infused with observations where organisations' intentions (enacted premises) are not aligned with their practices.

Accordingly, the discourse on organisation paves the way for thinking about them as comprised of multiple cultures. In other words, they contain multiple contexts for meaning making and interpretation. An interest in this study is to explore whether customer focus may exist at an enacted premise context, while at the underlying received practice context, there is little evidence of its actual existence (or alternatively, differences in meanings).

The aim of this study is to explore the alignment between enacted assumptions and meanings, with assumptions and meanings received in practice. The intention of this research design has been to develop a schema for interpreting enacted premise and received practice systems of meaning.

In explaining the two versions of organisational reality, three models of interest are Weick's (1969) "enactment" perspective, Argyris' (1976) "Theories of Action" and Whiteley's (1997) "PATOP Critical Thinking model". Ideas from Argyris' Theories of Action and Whiteley's PATOP Critical Thinking model have contributed to the conceptual framework. Weick's enactment perspective embodies concepts of enacted and personal premise. Argyris' espoused theories and theories in-use was a springboard for thinking about what people say and do. Whiteley's model introduced the idea of alignment and, later, received practice. The models are differentiated on the locus of meaning, that is, "the central location of where communication [or meaning making] takes place" (Krone, *et al*, 1987:21). Argyris' Theories of Action model locates meaning making in the minds of individuals. Whiteley's PATOP model locates meaning making in individuals' relatedness with one another. Weick's enactment perspective adopts a relational view to meaning making, however emphasis is placed on the context in which it happens to be embedded. The models are discussed to ground a schema for understanding premise-to-received practice relationships.

Enactment

The notion of 'enactment' emerges from Weick's (1969|79) thinking about organisations in terms of process. In Weick's perspective, the processes of organising parallel the processes of natural selection. Weick (1979, 130-131) conceptualises four key organising elements:

- i) "ecological change - the change in the flow of experience that engage people and activities;
- ii) enactment - actions that produce the raw materials which can then be made sensible;
- iii) selection - the process whereby the occurrences made by enactment are made sensible; and
- iv) retention - storage of the products of successful sense-making for future applications (termed enacted environments)".

Three of the four elements - enactment, selection and retention - represent the three processes of organising. Ecological change captures those phenomena external to the processes of organising which engage individuals' attention.

The process of enactment is crucial in the sense that it sets the stage for subsequent sense making and retention. Enactment can take one of two forms. One form is bracketing. Bracketing refers to the action of isolating an episode in a flow of experience for further attention. The other form is where the individual does something that produces an ecological change, which in turn is isolated through the action of bracketing for further attention. This latter form of enactment explains how individuals themselves create the environments to which they then attend:

"The reciprocal linkage between ecological change and enactment in the organising model is intended to depict the subjective origin of organisational realities. People in organisations repeatedly impose that which they later claim impose on them" (Weick, 1979:153).

The relationship between the four elements is depicted in Figure 1.2.

FIGURE 1.2: The relationship between the four elements of organising



Source: Weick, 1969:87

The principles behind Weick's (1969:86) organising perspective are:

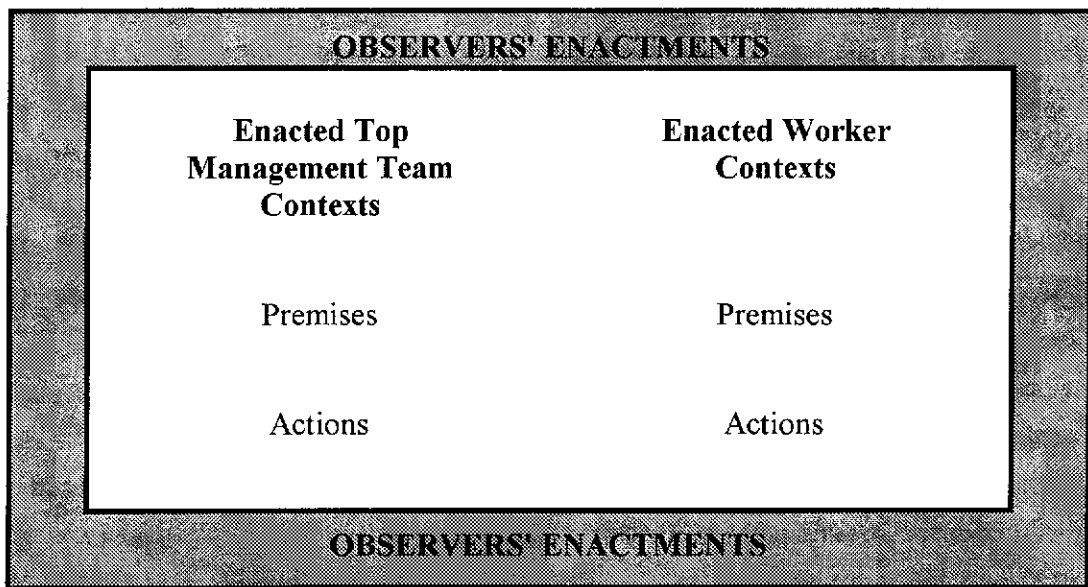
- i) "the three processes of organising are linked together such that retention affects both selection and enactment;
- ii) organising among humans involves two choice points, the choice regarding how to act and the choice regarding what to select;
- iii) the external environment in the form of ecological change impinges on the enactment process rather than on the selection process; and
- iv) lines leading from one process to another are information lines. They represent the transmission of information from one process to another".

Viewing organising as culture in process, contexts for meaning making and interpretation represent what the organisation is. While enactment refers to actions that create raw materials for further attention, selection is concerned with the attribution of meanings and interpretations on the enacted episodes. Meanings in Weick's (1969) organising perspective are always imposed after the fact and only after actions (enactment) have occurred. Meanings do not flow from enactment. Action in the here and now has no meaning for reasons that the "creation of meaning is an attentional process, and an action can only become the object of attention after it has occurred" (Weick, 1969:65). Weick (1969:67) continues:

"Whatever items are singled out of the flow of experience for closer attention will take on whatever is implicit in the pragmatic reflective glance. Whatever is now, at the present moment, underway will determine the meaning of everything that has already been accomplished ... The crucial point is that meaning is retrospective and is determined by the mode of attention directed to the lived experience".

Using Weick's organising formulation, the study of organisations is directed on a series of enactment episodes. For the observer, the action of study is on a series of bracketed episodes in the stream of organising experiences that she/he has created. Organising in the observer's snapshot depicts an array of enactment contexts as illustrated in Figure 1.3. In this study, two broad contexts are enacted, those of Top Management Teams and Workers.

FIGURE 1.3: An observer's snapshot of organising



Source: Inspired by Weick, 1969

The beliefs, values and assumptions in the here and now attended to a study by the observer, single out and create meaning for the episodes of interests. In other words, the observer through enactment creates the episodes of interest in a study. As shown in Figure 1.3, this study's interest lies in understanding the nature of enacted episodes of Top Management Teams and Workers.

Weick's (1969) perspective informs the researchers that what organisations say they do is plausibly but one enacted episode in a stream of experiences. The premise of Top Management Teams is enacted through meaning making and interpretation of the Public Sector Management Office's customer focus strategy. This is one part of the strategy process. Implementation is construed to rest with the meanings and interpretations taken by Workers as the customer focus strategy disseminates across the organisation.

In essence, what organisations say they do is one enacted customer focus 'reality'; that of Top Management Teams. In addition, Top Management Teams also act. These actions are further enactments that become available for attention by both Top Management Teams and Workers.

The study's interest rests with the alignment of meanings and interpretations enacted by Top Management Teams with those received in practice by Workers.

Accordingly, it is the premise and action enactments of Top Management Team that are received in practice by workers that create customer focus.

Adopting Weick's (1969) overarching organising framework, it is necessary to construct the more temporal relationships coexisting within the Worker and Top Management Team enacted environments. Specifically, a schema for understanding the relationships between premise and practice meanings of Top Management Teams, and meanings received in practice by organisational Workers. Argyris' (1967) Theories of Action provided the springboard for thinking about the nature of enactment episodes in terms of premise and action.

Theories of action

The following argument centres around the well-established frames of reference presented by Argyris (1976) and his co-workers (Argyris and Schön, 1974 and 1996) as they explored the relationship between intentions and actions. It is not the intention of this study to provide a complete analysis on Theories of Action as this may be found in the works of Argyris (1993, 1991, 1990, and 1976) and his co-workers (Argyris and Schön, 1996; Argyris *et al*, 1985). These works provide a detailed analysis on the Theories of Action concept. What is relevant is an overview of the major features of the theory on which Argyris' assumptive context can be distilled.

A basic premise of human nature is that for "individuals to remain sane, they must make their world manageable and controllable" (Argyris, 1980:10). Given this premise, Argyris posits that, as do organisations, human beings design their directions and actions.

"Human beings are designing beings. They create, store and retrieve designs that advise them how to act if they are to achieve their intentions and act consistently with their governing values" (Argyris, 1995:20).

In the design of directions and actions to make the world manageable and controllable, Argyris (1990:13) suggests that individuals possess two theories of control; termed "espoused theories: the beliefs and values people hold about how to manage their lives, and theories-in-use: the actual rules used to manage the beliefs". It is important to recognise that the theories-in-use or "master programs" (Argyris, *et*

al, 1985:20), are the "theories that inform actions, it is not the actions themselves" (Argyris, 1980:14).

Although the espoused theories of individuals vary markedly (Argyris, 1976 and 1996), most theories-in-use have two universal basic components. The first component is the values that individuals attempt to satisfy; that is, the "governing variables" (Argyris, 1976:639). Argyris (1991:103) describes these as "to design one's actions consistently according to four basic values:

- i) to remain in unilateral control;
- ii) to maximise winning and minimise losing;
- iii) to suppress negative feelings; and
- iv) to be as rational as possible".

The second component of theories-in-use are the behavioural strategies or actions that people use in order to manage their values. These typically are:

- i) "advocating a position of unilaterally controlling others in order to win that situation;
- ii) unilaterally controlling the task to be performed; and
- iii) unilaterally deciding how much they are to be told, how much is to be withheld, and how much they are to be deceived about what is being distorted and withheld" (Argyris, 1976:639).

These two components lead to three consequences:

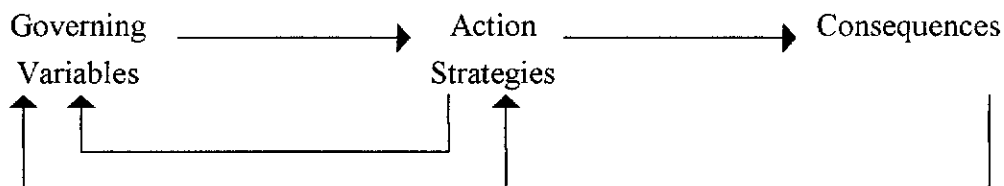
- i) "the world in which people live and work tends to become more defensive and less open;
- ii) learning at best solves the presenting problem and not the more fundamental problem of why the problem existed in the first place; and
- iii) problem solving tends to be ineffective for the difficult or threatening issues whose discussion might violate the governing variables" (Argyris, 1976:639).

The functioning of the governing variables and behavioural strategies with the three consequences is termed Model I theories-in-use. Argyris (1976: 639) posits that two important features of being programmed with the Model I theories-in-use is that individuals:

- i) "are not taught to reflect accurately on our behaviour and its impact, especially when we are interacting with others; and
- ii) do not tell others when we experience them behaving incongruently with what they espouse".

Argyris' Model 1 theories-in-use is depicted in Figure 1.4.

FIGURE 1.4: Model 1 Theories-In-Use



Source: Argyris, *et al*, 1985:84

Argyris (*et al*, 1985:82) emphasises the distinction between espoused theories and theories-in-use as follows:

"The discrepancy between what people say and what they do is an old story. It is sometimes expressed in the saying, 'Do as I say, not as I do'. But the distinction between espoused theory and theories-in-use goes beyond this common conception. It is true that what people do often differs from the theories they espouse. We are saying, however, that there is a theory that is consistent with what they do; and this we call their theories-in-use. Our distinction is not between theory and action but between two theories of action: those that people espouse, and those that they use".

From the cultural perspective, theories-in-use parallel thinking on organisations as cognitive structures. "Culture is generated by the human mind by means of a finite number of rules or means of an unconscious logic" (Schall, 1983:348). In Smircich's (1983a:350) view, theories-in-use parallel with "the rules or scripts that guide action". Here, action is viewed as guided, as opposed to controlled, by tacit rules or scripts. These rules or scripts relate to the organisation communication processes. Communication rules are defined by Schall (1983:560) as follows.

"Tacit understandings (generally unwritten and unspoken) about appropriate ways to interact (communicate) with others in given roles and situations; they are choices, not laws (though they constrain choice

through normative, practical or logical force) and they allow interactors to interpret behaviour in similar ways (shared meanings)".

Similar to Argyris' (1991) premise of theories-in-use as the skills, values and attitudes people use to design their behaviour, the organisational communication perspective views "people as not being governed by rules or as merely following them, rather people are users of rules" (Rose, 1988:145). Accordingly, "theories-in-use [*vis a vis* communication rules] are not a given, they must be constructed from observation of the pattern of action in question" (Argyris and Schön, 1996:13). Thus, a pattern of action representing theories-in-use is discernible through spoken language.

Taking theories-in-use and communication rules as related constructs locates the processes of meaning making and interpretation as residing within the minds of individuals. As stated previously, this approach emphasises the structural properties of interpretations that often neglects the more temporal aspects of organisational experiences. In examining the alignment between premise and received practice, it is the relational nature (or similarities in points of view) which enable researchers to investigate the "cognitive logic" (Isabella, 1990) underlying a particular situation.

Rather than viewing the in-use as rule governed, this study adopts the premise of in-use as being context bound. As a result, in-use is not so much a discernible structure, rather a context, for meaning making and interpretation. Put simply, the practice context is a way of seeing, not as "rules" (Schall, 1983; Rose, 1988), but as "symbolic fields" (Berg, 1985).

THEORISING OF ARGYRIS - ESPOUSED THEORY

Argyris espoused claims allegiance to an interpretive worldview. The central tenet of interpretive research is the view of organisations as social constructions (Dachler and Hosking, 1995). "Rather than having an independent existence, organisations exist in and through members' communicative and production activities" (Deetz and Kersten, 1983:157). As Putnam (1983b:35) puts it:

"Interpretivists believe reality is socially constructed, through the words, symbols, and behaviours of its members. Collectivities are symbolic processes that evolve through streams of ongoing behaviour instead of through static facts".

From a paradigmatic premise, interpretivists view organisations as "socially constructed systems of shared meaning" (Smircich, 1983b:221). Argyris' allegiance to the interpretive view is illustrated by his claim of a "practice orientation" (Argyris and Schön, 1996:xxi) to organisational learning.

*"We must keep in mind that practice is social action. When the situation that the actor frames involves other people, then the framing will include the agent's beliefs about the intentions and beliefs of other people. The consequences of action include the reactions of those others, which themselves depend on how they frame the situation and on their beliefs about the intentions and beliefs of the original actor ... interactions presume intersubjective understandings in the community of practice. Action also creates shared understandings, which then enter into future action. Our account of the epistemology of practice must include the rules and norms of inquiry of the relevant community, as they are created and maintained by the actions of individuals" (Argyris, *et al.*, 1985:52).*

In summary, Argyris espoused is based on interpretive assumptions emphasising the social construction of meaning. Meanings espoused and meanings in-use represent two forms of organisational reality. Through analysis of the cognitive basis of thought, Argyris posits inconsistencies between the theories that people espouse and the theories that they use.

THEORISING OF ARGYRIS - THEORY IN-USE

On the other side of the Theories of Action coin is Argyris 'in-use', that is, Argyris' application of his own thinking. Application of Argyris' thinking is modeled on thermostat and cybernetic metaphors (Argyris, 1976:638). From this perspective, systems are perceived as "capable of self regulation in terms of some externally prescribed target or criterion, such as a thermostat" (Scott, 1987:77). In the context of learning, the thermostat metaphor explains how errors are detected and corrected, but fails to account for reasons why the problems arise in the first instance. The addition of a reflexive loop (hence the notion of a dynamic cybernetic system) explains how the system, through questioning its own underlying beliefs or master programs, can shift to a state of learning to learn. This phenomenon Argyris (1976:639) terms "Model 2 theories-in-use".

The choice of metaphors used by Argyris, for example thermostat and cybernetic, and the language used in framing his ideas, for example 'Theories' of Action, suggests Argyris in-use as underpinning a functionalist approach in explaining organisational phenomena. From this view, the world in which individuals live is assumed to exist independently of the individuals awareness of it. "The cybernetic, loosely coupled system, and population ecology metaphors all have their roots in the natural sciences, and all in one way or another emphasise the idea that organisations can be seen as adaptive systems" (Morgan, 1980:616). As such, the social world is construed on assumptions of order and cohesiveness, in much the same manner as the physical world is construed.

Hatch (1997:371) supports the idea of Argyris' learning model as functionalist when she asserts "the modernist, following the path of natural science, develops the notion of cybernetic systems, adding a reflexive loop that allows the system self-awareness". Furthering this functionalist analysis is the notion of "design causality", a central tenet to Argyris' (1996:396-397) Theories of Action.

"A core feature of the mind/brain is that it functions as a designing system. Designs are specifications of actions to be taken to achieve the intended consequences. At the core of all such designs is causality. ... The nature of this causality may be stated in the form, given such and such conditions if A then B. Like Lewin, I believe this type of causality is at the heart of human beings designing causal consequences to achieve intended consequences".

The above argument suggests that while Argyris' espoused theorising is closely aligned with an interpretive worldview, Argyris' in-use theorising is aligned with functionalist assumptions. Burrell and Morgan (1979) in their paradigmatic assessment of organisational theories remark on a tendency for writers on organisations to equate the action frame of reference with interpretive approaches such as ethnomethodology and phenomenology. They assert this thinking represents a gross misstatement of the actual position.

"Whilst action theorists often make reference to the work of phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists, they do not follow the full implications of the latter's point of view ... they tend to incorporate the insights of 'outsiders' insofar as they serve useful ends. Action theorists have used notions derived from the phenomenological perspective to

shore up and support the functionalist point of view" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:201).

Using Argyris' (et al, 1985:22) argument that "individuals' theories-in-use are so internalised that they are taken-for-granted ... they exist tacitly because they are used skillfully", it seems plausible to suggest his interpretive talk is governed by tacit functionalist assumptions. This view is supported by Barrett (et al, 1995) who assert "it is impossible to perceive something without interpretation, and interpretation is made possible by prejudice and pre-understanding that are built into the language that one inherits and uses". This study argues that to espouse an interpretive framework requires adoption of interpretive practices. Language, representing a symbolic form of action, must align with the rhetoric.

From function to context

Argyris' (1976:638) "psychological level knowledge" model provides a basis for thinking about where espoused and practiced become aspects of contexts from the interpretivist perspective. The term 'context' underpins the symbolic interpretivist perspective of organising where culture is the context for meaning making and interpretation (Hatch, 1997). In Guba and Lincoln's (1989:175) words "contexts give life to and are given life by the constructions that are held by the people in them".

From the organisational communication perspective, organisations, like cultures, are considered as communication phenomenon. As Schall (1983:560) puts it, "entities are developed and maintained only through continuous communication activity - exchanges and interpretations - among its participants". From this frame interaction is accentuated, which shifts the thinking on espoused and practiced phenomena, not as cognitions, but as relational contexts. "Through patterns of discourse we form relational bonds with one another ... the very act of communicating is the process through which we constitute experience" (Barrett, et al, 1995:353). From Heller's (et al, 1998:69) premise of organisation as "forms of interaction", premise and received practice are plausibly two relational contexts of the organisational form.

Based upon functionalist assumptions of causal design leading to intended consequences, Argyris (1976) Theories of Actions takes communication as one further variable of what an organisation *has*. Knowledge about communication becomes a further tool at the disposal of management to further control. In contrast, a processual view of organising conceptualises organisation as essentially a

communicative phenomenon. As Weick (1969:90) asserts, "the central argument is that any organisation *is* the way it runs through the processes of organising". Weick (1969:90) continues by promoting the relational nature of these processes.

"These processes consist of interlocked behaviours, are related and form a system. The relationships of mutual causation that make the separate processes into a system constitute and control the system. This means, depending on the pattern of relationships that exists among the processes, there will be either control or chaos. It must be remembered that it is the relationships rather than processes that control the fate of any system".

A relational nature of meaning making is supported by Barrett (et al, 1995:353) who suggest that "instead of seeing meaning making centred in the individual's head, we should view meaning as occurring in our relatedness with one another". This relational view of meaning making supports a premise of organising to be more appropriately understood in terms of context. Gergen (1995:222) adopts this premise by asserting "human social systems and individuals aim to depict or represent the world in itself. This occurs in symbolic form in context of communication".

Observing Weick's (1983:27) plea of a "need for contextual inquiry and sensitivity to context", context in this paper is taken broadly to mean "those 'bands' or 'strips' of time-space within which gatherings take place" (Giddens, 1984:71). Giddens emphasises the notions of time and space as relational, as opposed to separate, phenomena. From this perspective, "humans make their own geography as much as they make their own history" (Giddens, 1984:363).

Adopting a relational premise for intentions and practice directs thinking on communicating as something an organisation *is* rather than what it *has* (Smircich and Calás, 1987; Schall, 1983). Ford and Baucus (1987:373) support this view by focusing on the more temporal aspects of interpretation; more specifically, the relational aspects of interaction.

"Interpretations are not determined by contextual factors; rather, contextual factors serve as part of the experience and reality through which ... interpretations are informed and shaped".

Weick (1983:23) suggests that "despite appeals for contextual inquiry and sensitivity to context, no one is exactly sure what is being requested or how to produce it". Similarly, from an epistemological perspective, Dachler and Hosking (1995:1) point out that "the relational view has gone largely unconsidered in the organisation literatures". This study embellishes Weick's, and Dachler and Hosking's notion of context as an underdeveloped concept by positing a received practice context of meaning making and interpretation as an important element in understanding the relational nature between organisational intentions and actions.

In explaining the relational nature between organisational intentions and practice, Whiteley (1997:1) argues a model of action based on a cognitive "hierarchical schema". As implied in Whiteley's language, the use of the term "schema" underscores the relational nature between intentions and actions based on interpretive assumptions of culture as an "epistemological metaphor" (Schall, 1983:557); hence the view of culture as 'what an organisation is'. Whiteley's PATOP model holds intentions and actions to be understandable in terms of contexts for meaning making and interpretation.

Critical thinking model (PATOP)

Whiteley (1999:2) expresses elements of organisational life in terms of the alignment between what is said and happens in practice. Whiteley's hierarchical schema is framed on her paired dimensions of philosophy and assumptions (termed the "talk"), and theory of organising and practices (termed the "walk"). The model serves as a framework to trace organisational practice, theory, and assumptions, to the epistemological knowledge within an organisation. Application of the model leads to "investigation of the hidden premises or underlying assumptions of workers and managers with a view to creating a third, shared, view" (Whiteley, 1997:2). As such, the PATOP model is concerned with "identifying the cognitive logic threading through the understanding of a particular situation" (Isabella, 1990:9). This model is depicted in Table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1: Whiteley's PATOP Critical Thinking Model

Talk	Philosophy (P)	The mental model or 'true' nature of reality.
	Assumptions (A)	What can be taken-for-granted as 'given' in allegiance to the particular truth stated.
WALK	Theory of organising (TO)	Based on the above assumptions, how will work be designed and organised.
	Practices (Pr)	Based on these designs, what will be the daily practices at work

Source: Whiteley, 1997.

Whiteley's (1997) PATOP model contextualises Argyris' (1976) espoused and practiced concepts by positing a hierarchy of meaning system. The meaning system is assumed to be maintained through interaction. Thus, while Argyris' schema is premised on two distinct value systems (in terms of espoused theories and theories-in-use), Whiteley's schema synthesises these by using the meanings attributed to the organisational "talk" and "walk" as the focus of interest. In other words, rather than assume an espoused conscious state (a type of social fact) and a separate, practiced, tacit state (the rules used to inform the social facts), Whiteley links the notion of espoused (talk) in a formative relationship with how individuals interpret situations and make them meaningful through interaction (walk). In a communicative sense, talk is construed as spoken metaphors, while walk is construed as action metaphors.

As opposed to "mechanical and biological metaphors which treat organisations simply as transformation and control systems" (Ford and Baucus, 1987:377) Whiteley's framework, like that of Daft and Weick (1984), treats them as "meaning systems", where interpretation is central to processes of organising. "Meaning hierarchies are intra-personal in nature, but they are used by individuals to situate interpersonal action" (Rose, 1988:147), hence the emphasis on the contextual nature of organising. In other words, things may convey different meanings at different levels (or hierarchies) of context.

The view of organising as contexts of meaning holds currency with Barrett's (et al, 1995:357) interpretive view of knowledge to the extent that "the object in the world and the descriptions of it cannot be separated: The vocabulary for talking about the world actually make the objects and experiences available to us in one form as

opposed to another". Putnam (1983b:44) explains this in terms of a merger of structure and processes.

"Although behaviour is voluntaristic, people enact regularised sets of relationships that reflect back on their ongoing actions. The processes they create become accepted practices that impact on daily interactions. These habitual actions are not cast in cement; ongoing activities alter them. Thus ... processes and structure merge together".

Whiteley's schema is aligned with the view of organising as contexts for meaning making and interpretation (Hatch, 1997). The premise-to-practice relation, representing two forms of organisational 'reality', is conceptualised as an action metaphoric for structure, maintained through social interaction. The synthesised view of intentions and actions provides the premise for investigating the relational features between the two through investigation of organisational interpretation processes. The approach is resonant with "symbolic convergence theory" (Bormann, 1983) to the extent that Whiteley concentrates on the way shared symbols build, as opposed to reflect, a general consensus about organisational reality.

Theories of Action and PATOP contrasted

The similarity in thinking behind Argyris' (1976) and Whiteley's (1997) models for explaining espoused and practiced events lies in the view of organisations as "cognitive enterprises" (Argyris and Schön, 1978). Both models aim to elicit the meaning systems that guide organisational interaction (noting Whiteley's emphasis of a relational nature, as opposed to Argyris' structural emphasis). Typically, this interaction is conceived as rational, with apparent common purpose, including control, improved efficiency or survival. Organised action is construed and maintained through shared meanings which assumes "organisation as static patterns of meaning" (Barrett, et al, 1995:353). Hence, Argyris' (1976) and Whiteley's (1997) schemata are 'applicable tools for managers' in understanding the relationship between intentions and actions from a meaning frame of reference.

Application of the thinking from the two models however, leads to two, quite distinct forms of managerial activity. Argyris (1996:402), guided by assumptions of causal design, asserts managing to mean "creating intended consequences". Whiteley (1997:4), guided by a contextual view of organising, asserts managing to mean "surfacing and harmonising various mental models, and ways of relating them within

and between internal and external groups". Whiteley (1997:4) continues by suggesting "application of the PATOP model will convince managers of the need to work with employees to investigate, through daily practices, the hidden premises or underlying assumptions/paradigms of both parties with a view to creating a third, shared, view". Such thinking introduces the plausibility of a received practice context.

Interpretivist causality

An assertion in this study is the existence of a received practice context of meaning making and interpretation. This context is posited as central in understanding and explaining the relationship between intentions and actions. The received practice context is founded on a re-conceptualisation of Argyris' (1976) "Theories of Action" in terms of 'contexts of action', although care needs to be taken that the notions developed for this study are not taken to be a replica of Argyris' core concepts. The premise for a context of action frame of reference is argued on an interpretivist view of causality, rather than the functionalist view as adopted by Argyris. The following discussion further explores the interpretivist/functionalist argument of causality as presented in the literature.

Putnam (1983b:41) describes the difference between functionalist and interpretivist assumptions on causality as follows.

"For functionalists, causality is vital to the development of generalisable knowledge. Researchers work in a deductive manner to discover cause-effect relationships that predict patterns of behaviour across situations. Interpretivists, in contrast, seek causal explanations for different reasons, primarily to understand the actor's view of his or her social world. Interpretivist research extends beyond disclosing subjective meanings to an examination of why and how shared meanings exist. Hence, interpretivists formulate interpretations or causal explanations that account for the way that subjective meanings are created and sustained in a particular study, while functionalists link causal relationships to universal laws".

Putnam (1983b:41) uses the methodological distinctions between functionalism and interpretivism to distinguish nomothetic and ideographic explanations.

"Nomothetic analysis focuses on an examination of regularities and relationships that lead to universal laws, while ideographic explanation centres on reasons why individuals create and interpret their world in a particular way".

Regularities and patterned behaviours are central to both functionalists and interpretivists but for different reasons. Putnam (1983b:42) describes these reasons as follows.

"Interpretivists incorporate regularities into their relativistic view of the social world, while functionalists use them to develop universal laws. In effect, functionalists and interpretivists share concern for causal explanations and patterned relationships, but they conduct their research task differently and they incorporate their findings into relativistic or universal interpretations in diverse ways".

Adopting an interpretivist ideographic view of premise-to-practiced relations, causal explanations:

- are aimed at understanding from the actors point of view;
- account for the way subjective meanings are created and sustained specific to the context under investigation; and
- centre on the reasons why individuals create and interpret their world in their specific context.

Contexts of Action

Based on the above argument, Argyris' (1976) "Theories of Action" can be re-conceptualised in terms of contexts of action as detailed in Table 1.2. Argyris' notions of 'espoused' and 'in-use' are more meaningfully construed as 'enacted premise' and 'practice'. Table 1.2 contrasts functionalist (Argyris, 1976) and interpretivist (Whiteley, 1997) thinking on action, mediated through an enactment (Weick, 1969) lens.

TABLE 1.2: Contexts of Action

	Functionalist	Contextual
Enacted premise	Purported held values and assumptions	Spoken metaphors developed from relational assumptions and meanings, derived in and through interaction.
Practice	Unaware rules for designing intended actions	Action metaphors developed from relational assumptions and meanings, derived in and through interaction.

Source: Adapted from Weick's (1969) "Organising" perspective, Argyris (1976) "Theories of Action" and Whiteley's (1997) "PATOP model".

Received practice context of meaning

While Argyris' (1976) research efforts focus on explaining people's theories-in-use, Whiteley's (1997) schema promotes understanding on the relational nature of intentions and actions. The relational nature of intentions and actions can be expanded to accommodate a pluralist view of organising. From the pluralist perspective, organising includes a multiple of perspectives; "an array of fractionalised groups with diverse purposes and goals" (Putnam, 1983b:37). Understanding communicative action in organisation requires understanding the meanings and interpretations individuals assign to phenomena from their unique points of view (Daft and Weick, 1984; Ford and Baucus, 1987). Smircich (1983b:224) describes the notion of multiple perspectives in the following way.

"Within any formal organisation there are clusters of people who share some meanings or myths that are quite different from those of another group; hence within the boundaries of an organisation there are multiple meaning systems, competing myths, and rival theories for understanding organisational experience In most organisations it is likely that at least two meaning systems prevail: managerial and non-managerial. What is often called a communication breakdown is frequently a disjuncture in systems of meaning, or in other words, a case of different realities".

Rose (1988:143) supports the pluralist perspective by seizing upon Putnam's assertion of a merger between structure and process. He asserts that "it is in this reflexivity [people enact regularised sets of relationships that reflect back on their ongoing actions] that the roots of contradiction and the probability of multiple cultures in organisations rests".

From such arguments it seems plausible that:

- acting dynamically, assumptions and the process of meaning creation can be considered as relational phenomena, which collectively influence action taken; and
- organisation consists of multiple, potentially conflicting realities.

Based on the contextual position, thinking on premise and practice meaning systems is expanded to include a third, which can be construed as 'received practice meanings', or 'received practice' for short. Received practice is taken to mean subjective meanings, evolved through interaction and used to purposefully or inadvertently, shape actions. As such, received practice meanings represent individuals' interpretations enacted through interaction on premise and practice.

Received practice meanings are contextual in terms that they are enacted through attending to phenomena created by others. That is, the meanings taken by Workers are enacted from the meaning made by Top Management Teams as conveyed in their spoken and action metaphors. Isabella (1990:10) points out "managers serve a significant cognitive function in organisations by interpreting events and ultimately using those interpretations to frame meaning for other organisational participants". Likewise, Daft and Weick (1984:286) assert "when one speaks of interpretation one really means interpretation by a relatively small group at the top of the organisational hierarchy". The notion of the received practice context allows analysis of degrees to which workers share managerial interpretations. The premise-to-received practice schema provides a level of understanding for what customer focus means in context (what Top Management Teams say they do) and why customer focus means the things that people attribute to it (what Workers receive in practice).

Accordingly, in this study, received practice meanings are the way Workers operationalise what they think about customer focus strategy as enacted by Top Management Teams. The contextual frame depicted in the Context of Action Schema in Table 1.2 is expanded to include a received practice context. The revised

schema is detailed in Table 1.3, termed the Contexts of Enactment Schema and further developed in Chapter three (see figure 3.3).

TABLE 1.3: Contexts of Enactment Schema

ENACTMENT EPISODES		
	Enacted Top Management Team contexts	Enacted Worker contexts
Spoken Metaphors	Meaning Making	Meaning Taking
Action Metaphors	Practice	Received Practice

ENACTMENT EPISODES

Source: Adapted from Weick's (1969) Organising Perspective, Argyris' (1976) Theories of Action and Whiteley's (1997) PATOP Critical Thinking Model

In sum, premise and practice of Top Management Teams are construed as being developed from relational assumptions and meanings, derived in and through interaction. Received practice pertains to the relational assumptions and meanings Workers attribute to premise and practice intentions of Top Management Teams. Received practice meanings are not seen as a separate theory as implied in Argyris' (1976) Theories of Action, for they exist only in and through, interaction. This notion shifts the thinking on meaning making, not as residing within the cognitive processes of individuals rather, as occurring in the relations between individuals (Barrett, *et al*, 1995, Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996).

Consequently, the received practice is more appropriately conceptualised as one further element (in the sense of contexts of meanings) in understanding intentions to actions phenomena. This premise preserves the relational feature of walk and talk as implied in Whiteley's PATOP schema. Hierarchy is appropriate in this sense as in line with others (Isabella, 1990; Gray, *et al*, 1985; Smirch, 1983b; Daft and Weick, 1984), managers are construed to serve a significant function in organisations by interpreting events and using those interpretations to frame meaning for other organisational members.

Premise-to-received practice assumptive context

Based upon metaphorical thinking of organisations as cultures, premise-to-received practice is taken to mean contexts for meaning making and interpretation (the structure of meanings). Relations between structures of meanings are maintained through social interaction, in particular the organisational communication processes. Meanings emerge from interaction, and also act, through the structure of meanings, to constrain subsequent interactions. Organisation thus results from the premise and received practice interdependencies. Premise and received practice coexist as contexts for meaning making and interpretation through which message exchange and meaning assignment are made.

The assumptive context to the premise-to-received practice schema is summarised as follows:

- The schema is conceived as an inter-subjective organisational construct which links individuals' (intra-personal) perspectives, specifically their assumptions, values and interpretations.
- "Organisations are framed in cultural terms as symbolic fields, that is, patterns of clustered symbolic representations which constitute the organisation reality" (Tompkins, 1987:84).
- Culture (systems of shared knowledge) is taken to mean contexts for meaning making and interpretation (Hatch, 1997; Whiteley, 1997); with "interpretation being the process through which information is given meaning and actions are chosen" (Daft and Weick, 1984:294).
- "Symbols are constructed subjectively and inter-subjectively agreed" (Gioia, 1986:53), principally through communication. In other words, symbols are developed in and through, interaction (communication).
- Interaction is taken to be a "form of organisation" (Heller, *et al*, 1998:69), with organising being "explicitly communicative" (Krone, *et al*, 1987).
- Language (as a surface artifact or communication) "is the route to thought patterns that are maintained through communication" (Smircich and Calás, 1987). In the words of Heidegger (in Barrett, *et al*, 1995:369), "people do not speak language, language speaks people".
- While studies examining the structural properties of interpretations generally treat the locus of meaning making within the minds of individuals (Weick and Bougon, 2001; Gioia, 1986; Gregory, 1983), studies on the temporal aspects of interpretation treat the locus of meaning in individuals relatedness with one

another (Heller, *et al*, 1998; Rose, 1988, Ranson *et al*, 1980). The more temporal aspects to interpretation are construed as being bounded contextually.

- Within this contextual frame of reference, meanings are taken to exist at a variety of levels, framed as a hierarchy of meanings (Whiteley, 1997; Rose, 1988). "Meaning hierarchies are intra-personal in nature, but they are used by individuals to situate interpersonal action" (Rose, 1988:147).
- Top Management Team premise and practice are enacted episodes in the flow of experiences which are available for further enactment by both Top Management Teams and Workers.
- Adopting a pluralist perspective, organisations are comprised of a multitude of realities (Rose, 1988; Smircich, 1983b). From this perspective, a third context (or type of 'organisational form' in Heller's (*et al*, 1998) sense) of meaning making is posited, termed the received practice.
- The received practice context is taken to mean Workers' interpretations enacted through interaction on Top Management Teams' enacted premise and practice meanings. In other words, premise, practice and received practice are relational meaning contexts maintained through interaction.

Summary

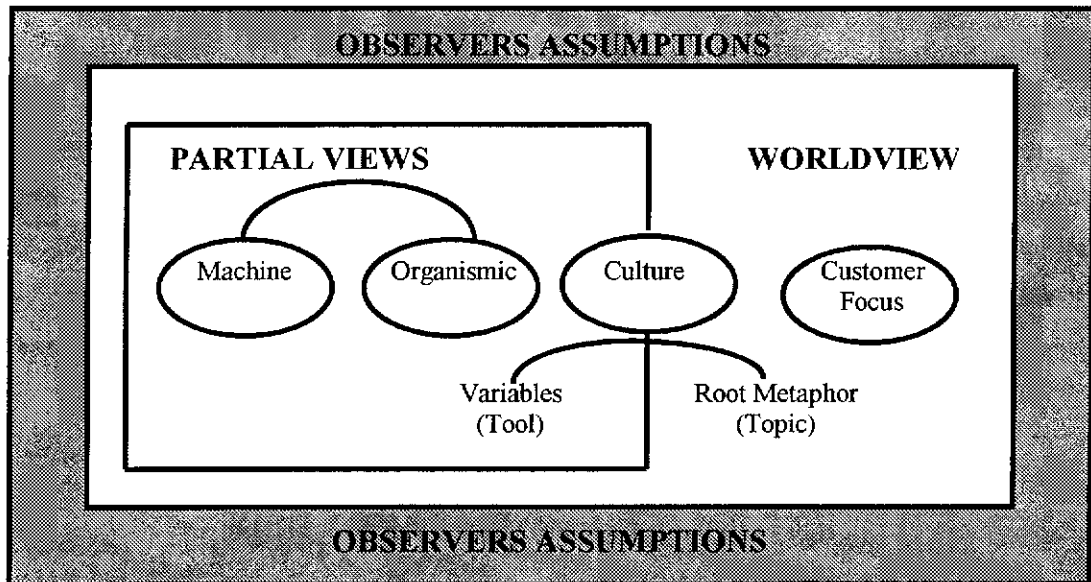
This Chapter has articulated a 'frame' for investigating the relationship between organisational intentions and actions. Weick's (1969) organising perspective provided a basis for framing the intentions to actions relationship. Top Management Team actions of premise and practice are construed as enacted episodes in a flow of organising experiences. The study investigates the alignment of the meaning making (enacted premise) and action (practice) contexts of Top Management Teams with meanings received in practice by Workers.

In analysing the relationship between intentions and actions, Argyris' (1976) notion of "Theories of Action" was utilised as a framework for thinking. This study posits a schema based on the relational nature between premise and received practice meaning contexts. Although Argyris' and the study's models of action both view organising through culture as root metaphor, the study's model views meaning making and interpretation as "symbolic processes" (Putnam, 1983b:35), as opposed to a function of individuals' cognition.

As a platform for reviewing the literature on organisation relevant to the study, a visual representation of the major elements to the review is presented in Figure 1.5.

Figure 1.5 introduces relationships between dominant themes emerging from the organisational literature and locates the premise-to-received practice relationship within such discourse.

FIGURE 1.5: Locating Customer Focus in Relationship to Major Metaphors on Organisation



Inspired by Smircich (1985)

The assumptions underlying the substance to Figure 1.5 in terms of the key notions 'partial view', 'worldview', 'machine', 'organismic', 'culture', 'variables' and 'root metaphor' are elaborated upon in Chapter two. Chapter three - methodology, provides the substance to the shaded area 'observers assumptions'. Chapter four articulates the methods and tools by which the study methodology is put into motion - the research design. Chapter five presents the study's findings which are discussed in Chapter six. Chapter seven draws conclusions from analysis and discussion of the study's findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter one conceptualised the notion of organisation in processual terms. This Chapter delves beneath the surface construction to identify its constitutive elements. A useful framework is developed by Hatch (1997:61) who proposes six core concepts upon which organisation theorists rely to construct their theories:

- organisation environment;
- strategy;
- technology;
- social structure;
- culture; and
- physical structure.

Of the six, only the first five are relevant to the study. Excluding physical structure, the remaining five core concepts will be explored in three ways. First a contextual element of the study will be identified from the 'outsider looking in' perspective. Second, developments in thinking within the literature for the contextual element will be discussed under the heading of functionalist thinking. Third, challenges to the thinking will be discussed under the heading of symbolic interpretivist thinking.

The purpose in using the core concepts is that they are fairly stable features of organisations on which most of the literature discourse is based. In this study, their importance lies in providing the shape through which customer focus is expressed. Weick (1969:16) views the constitutive elements as "media". "They become important only as they become incorporated into the processes of organising".

The view of customer focus in the post-industrialised organisational setting needs to be developed within a theoretical framework for understanding the concept of organisation itself. An operational definition for the concept of organisation is detailed, supported by various literature perspectives. This is followed with a discussion on core concepts organisational theorists rely to construct their theories. Finally, using the thinking emerging from the organisational discourse, the study presents an 'assumptive context' on which to interpret meanings attributed to individuals' language in-use.

Mapping out the terrain

The literature on organisational theory of which change initiatives such as customer focus would be a subset is exhaustive. One way to make sense of the plethora of thoughts on organisation is by identifying the assumptions, latent or otherwise, to which the ideas pertain. Assumptions, in this context, is taken to mean "the ultimate, non-debatable, taken-for-granted values" as proposed by Schein (1991:372). In Schein's (1991) view, assumptions are taken-for-granted not as a result of repression. Rather they become unconscious. Thus, the purpose of Chapter two is to surface unconscious assumptions lurking beneath ideas presented in the organisation discourse.

To surface assumptions beneath the ideas on organisation rests in the choice of "classification scheme" (Putnam, 1983b:33) or "frame of reference" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:x; Morgan, 1997:141) on which to construe their meaning. Classification schemes and frames of reference are taken to mean "the perspective through which people view an event" (Isabella, 1990:8).

One frame of reference frequently serving as an 'anchor' throughout the organisation discourse is Kuhn's (1962) notion of "paradigm". Paradigm is taken to mean "the set of assumptions, theories and models that are commonly accepted and shared within a particular field of activity at any one point in time" (Burnes, 1992:56). Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) define the notion as the "basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator", or in other words, that guides action. As such, paradigm can be construed as the way in which individuals perceive the world which, in turn, guides action taken. This leads some authors, including Whiteley (1995:116), to simply describe paradigm as a "mindset" or "mental model".

Burrell and Morgan (1979:21) posit a framework construed on "two key dimensions of analysis, each of which subsumes a series of related themes". The two dimensions are:

- objective to subjective assumptions about the nature of reality; and
- regulation to radical change assumptions about the nature of society.

Based on the two dimensions, Burrell and Morgan (1979) present four distinct paradigms: functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist and radical structuralist.

These four paradigms define "fundamentally distinct perspectives for the analysis of social phenomena" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:23).

While there is general support for Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigm frame of reference, others, including Putnam (1983b) and Smircich (1983a) "quibble with their two-dimensional framework, their reliance on bipolar opposites to critique each paradigm, and their claims that the paradigms represent mutually exclusive alternatives" (Putnam, 1983b:34). Putnam (1983b) and Smircich (1983), along with Dachler and Hosking (1995), restrict their analyses to issues concerning how knowledge is obtained or created; in other words, epistemological analyses. As such, they adopt a two-fold frame of reference for interpreting the social world, similar to the objective - subjective dimension of Burrell and Morgan (1979). Following in the steps of Dachler and Hosking (1995), Putnam (1983b), and Smircich (1983b), this study adopts the functionalist and interpretivist two-fold frame of reference. These frames take their meaning from the argument developed throughout this Chapter and accordingly, no definitions are provided at this stage.

The notion of paradigm is further explored in Chapter three - methodology, and operationalised in putting the research paradigm into motion in Chapter four - research design. The notion is introduced at this point to illustrate how the general headings of 'functionalism' and 'interpretivism' can be used to classify differing views encountered within organisation discourse. As such, organisation discourse is characterised on the basis of two groups of thinking. It is argued that the two groups can be conceived as 'moorings' or 'anchors' for characterising organisation thinking in practice, in much the same way as the thinking is characterised in theory. The metaphor of mooring as defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary (1964) pertains to "permanent anchors and chains laid down to what a floating object is moored". In this image, 'functionalism' and 'interpretivism' are the anchors and chains upon which ideas presented in organisation discourse can be attached in the sense of Giddens' (1984:377) current "time-space edge".

Discourse on organisation is considered by addressing three points.

First, a contextual element of the study will be identified. The element is identified from an 'outsider looking in' perspective. In other words, elements are identified from the perspective of an independent observer on the phenomenon of interest. This view is adopted as this Chapter aims to provoke thought on a multitude of perspectives related to the study. Chapter six returns to the literature to provide

insight on the study's findings, but will do so from an 'insider looking out' perspective. That is, to enlist theories and ideas from the literature to develop the meanings and interpretations from analysis of the study data.

Second, the contextual element will be related to selected theories of organisation from the functionalist frame of reference. The theories are considered in terms of developments in thinking within the perspective. Care is taken in the use of the word development as opposed to "historical antecedents" (Aldrich and Marsden, 1988:363). In a similar vein to Hatch (1997:13), "rather than plot the course of events that comprise the past of organisational theory", the study attempts "to dig up the ancient life and culture of the ideas that constitute the field".

Third, the contextual element will be related to selected theories of organisation from the interpretivist frame of reference. The ideas within the interpretivist frame of reference challenge the dominant assumptions of the functionalist paradigm. As such, the challenges can be conceptualised as skylights, illuminating alternate areas of inquiry in understanding organisational theory. It is the skylights on which the research methodology will be grounded as discussed in Chapter three.

To commence, it is necessary to frame an operational definition for the notion of organisation itself, beginning with broader, more conceptual ideas on organisation and narrowing to those useful in defining organisation in a way that will support the study.

Embedding 'organisation' in the study context

Works on the concept of organisation provides the reader with an array of conflicting views and assumptions. What can be interpreted from the wider organisation discourse is that the manner in which the notion is viewed is a major determinant in emerging a particular research interest.

Organisation is defined at its most simple as a "distinct type of social unit" (Aldrich and Marsden, 1988:362). As such, conceptual differences between organisation and other social units can be made, for example, communities and informal groups. Barnard (1961:17) conceives organisation as a "system of consciously coordinated activities or forces of two or more persons". From this perspective, organisation is the "structural expression of rational action" (Selznick, 1961:19).

A more contemporary view is that of Heller (et al, 1998) who defines organisation as:

"Groups of people pursuing some of their interests by being formally committed to a common purpose, to a type of mutual relations at work, and to given methods of work".

To fully appreciate Heller's (et al, 1998) definition requires understanding of the meanings for terms 'common purpose', 'mutual relations' and 'methods of work'. These notions may more appropriately be framed as constitutive elements of organisation. For example, common purpose implies 'strategy', mutual relations implies 'structure', and methods of work implies 'technology'. These constitutive elements are three of what Hatch (1997:61) terms "the six core concepts used by organisational theorists to construct their theories". What such core concepts need is a framework for interpretation, an idea explored below.

Just as definitions of organisation vary, so to are the premises on which they are construed. A common theme is that organisation is a dominant feature of social life. Parsons (1961:32) writes of organisations in terms of "a broad type of collectivity which has assumed a particularly important place in modern industrial societies". Marlowe (1971:467) thickens the concept when he asserts "organisations increasingly dominate the social scene". Gioia and Sims (1986:7) assert that "one of the most omnipresent entities of modern society is now the organisation". A different view is that of Burnes (1992:22) who suggests:

"It is not an inevitable fact of life that modern societies are characterised by organisations of all shapes and sizes, rather that they are the product of a particular combination of circumstances ... including the shift from self sufficient, autonomous, individual work units to collective units of production controlled by an entrepreneur".

The thinking implied in Burnes' (1992), Parsons' (1961), Gioia and Sims' (1986), and Marlowe's (1971) assertions provides a basis for shifting from a position of defining organisation to consideration of different ways in which organisations are construed. Smircich (1983a:341) reminds the reader that the term organisation is "itself a metaphor referring to the experience of collective coordination and orderliness". A number of contemporary authors, including Hatch (1999), Whiteley (1995) and

Morgan (1980, 1997) adopt this premise and define organisations by way of conceptual metaphor.

Metaphor is taken to mean "a sense of paradox and the absurd, which invites the user to think about themselves or their situations in ways that are patently false" (Morgan, 1993:289). Although Morgan uses the terms "absurd" and "patently false", he suggests that in different contexts, metaphorical views can become commonplace to the extent they take on features of orthodoxy. For example, the metaphorical view of organisations as machines, over time, reified by machine-like language and affirmed as representing real life, the metaphor comes to represent reality.

Black (1961) argues that meanings conveyed by metaphors are dependent upon the world view of its user. Black distinguishes three perspectives on metaphor, the:

- i) substitution view - which holds metaphorical expression to be used in place of some literal expression;
- ii) comparison view - which holds metaphorical expression to be used for underlying analogy or similarity; and
- iii) interaction view - which holds metaphorical expression to be used for projecting a principal subject upon a subsidiary subject.

Black (1961:45-46) explains the difference between the three views as follows:

"Substitution metaphors and comparison metaphors can be replaced by literal translations - by sacrificing some of the charm, vivacity, or wit of the original, but with no loss of 'cognitive' content. But interaction metaphors are not expendable. Their mode of operation requires the reader to use a system of implications (a system of 'common-places' - or a special system established for the purpose in hand) as a means for selecting, emphasising, and organising relations in a different field. This use of a 'subsidiary subject' to foster insight into a 'practical subject' is a distinctive intellectual operation (though one familiar enough through our experiences of learning anything whatever), demanding simultaneous awareness of both subjects but not reducible to any comparison between the two".

Customer focus, in a metaphoric sense, is used to gain insights into organising from the interaction view. In other words, customer focus is taken as the subsidiary subject to project insights into the principle subject of organising.

The importance of metaphor to organisation theory is that "the researcher's choice of metaphors to frame his or her works reflects implicit assumptions about the nature of the world" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:232). Krefling and Frost (1985:168) further the notion in the sense:

"Metaphors service as models or paradigms that can help focus attention on what currently exists, frame other possibilities where change is perceived as desirable, and initiate action toward such change".

It is this notion of implicit assumptions reflected in discourse and language on which the study methodology is predicated.

Tompkins (1987:77) suggests that "setting aside organisational practice, most would accept that systematic theorising about organisations did not begin until the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries". This approximates the period implied when Burnes (1992) writes of a change in working life circumstances from individual work units to collectively managed groups. In describing developments in organisation thinking, the argument will be bounded by Tompkins' starting point of the turn of the twentieth century, using contemporary writers' application of metaphor.

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON ORGANISATION

Two dominant metaphors referred to in the literature create images of organisation in terms of machines and organisms. A third view likens organisation to systems. The three metaphors will be considered in light of relevant theoretical developments in which they are coined. The notion of organisation as systems stands today as orthodoxy within sociological discourse. This study adopts a metaphorical position for the notion of organisation as systems. Burrell and Morgan's assessment (1979:59) that "many social systems theorists incorrectly equate open systems with biological analogy as a basis of analysis rather than as an illustration of principle" supports the notion for a return from a position of orthodoxy to that of metaphor.

The machine metaphor is used throughout the literature to characterise theories of organisation first postulated at the turn of century. The view of organisation as a

machine is characterised in Classical Management Theory of Taylor (1947), Weber (1947) and Fayol (1949). Tompkins (1987:77) refers to these three authors as the "classical trinity"; a metaphor itself borrowed from Christianity.

Mechanistic organisational forms are characterised by "clearly defined tasks, specialisation and the division of labour, formal hierarchies, and rigid administrative routines" (Bennett, 1997: 273). Taylor's machine-like concepts are embodied in his four principles of scientific management (described in Whiteley, 1995:9):

- "there is a one best way or work organisation based on engineering models;
- people should be scientifically matched to tasks;
- the formula to managing is to supervise, reward and punish; and
- managers plan, coordinate and control".

A major implication of Taylor's mechanistic view of organisation is that the human dimension of work is reduced to "the levels of cogs in a machine" (Burnes, 1992:24). Euske and Roberts (1987:43) describe this in the following terms, that "scientific management is a technique for economic gain, one that often dehumanises the work force".

Images of organisations as machines are not limited to turn of the century thinking. Perrow (1972:14) for example, strongly argues that organisations "must be seen as tools". Perrow's assertion is based on a belief of organisations as instruments of power. In his view:

"Organisations are multi-purpose tools for shaping the world as one wishes it to be shaped. They provide the means for imposing one's definition of the proper affairs of men upon other men" (Perrow, 1972:14).

Emerging in reaction to the rational, deterministic view of society implied in Classical Management thinking is the image of organisation as "organic" (Burnes and Stalker, 1961:5). The organismic metaphor bears "resemblance to the Human Relations approach" (Burnes, 1992: 43). The Human Relations main precepts are:

- "man is an emotional rather than an economic rational being;
- organisations are cooperative, social systems rather than mechanical ones; and

- organisations are composed of informal structures, rules and norms as well as formal practices and procedures" (Burnes, 1992:28).

In Burns and Stalker's (1961:11) view,

"Organic systems are those which are best adapted to conditions of change ... The code of conduct characteristic of organic systems - those better fitted to survive and grow in changing conditions - comprehends more eventualities than that necessary in concerns under stable conditions. More information and considerations enter into decisions, the limits of feasible action are set more widely".

Similarity between the mechanistic and organic metaphors rest in their focus of interest from a "managerial point of view" (Morgan, 1997; Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As Burns and Stalker (1961:119) themselves point out, "both types [mechanic and organic] represent a 'rational' form of organisation, in that they may both, in our experience, be explicitly and deliberately created and maintained to exploit the human resources of a concern in the most efficient manner feasible in the circumstances of the concern". The bias towards a 'managerial point of view' can be conceived in terms of "managerial hegemony; the practice of interpreting the interests of the ruling class as universal" (Hatch, 1997:279). Deetz and Kersten (1983:165), explain how hegemony functions as follows:

"People become subjected to a total domination in which they are economically dependent ... this domination extends into their thinking and their perception of themselves".

Thus, while mechanistic forms are associated with Classical Management thinking (Weber, 1947) and organic forms with Human Relations thinking (Mayo, 1933; Roethlisberger and Dickson, 1939), both forms can be characterised as abstractions underpinning a managerial hegemony. This proposition of managerial hegemony is developed further in the discussion on social structure.

Aligned with the organic metaphor is the 'structural functionalism' framework of organisation. Structural functionalism "builds upon the concepts of holism, interrelationship between parts, structure, functions and needs" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:50) (based upon biological analogy). Giddens (1984:1) suggests structural functionalism assumes a natural science perspective in that it "emphasises the pre-eminence of the social whole over its individual parts (its constituent actors, human

subjects)". The two key elements to the structural functionalist perspective as developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) are as follows.

- Function refers to various solutions to a particular complex of problems that a system can adopt in order to survive. In Parsons and Smelser's (1956:16-18) view:

"Process in any social system is subject to four independent functional imperatives or 'problems' which must be met adequately if equilibrium and/or continuing existence of the system is to be maintained ... The four imperatives under which a system of action, in particular a social system, operate are pattern maintenance (including tension management), goal attainment, adaptation and integration".

The four functional imperatives referred to by Parsons and Smelser are contextualised within the discussion on systems metaphor following. The present point of interest is with the notion of equilibrium which implies a regulatory view of society. Smircich (1983b:227) supports this position by coining Gadalla and Cooper's (1978) notion of "regulative management; a system of control based on organised means for the attainment of specified goals". In other words, regulative management practices within the functionalist world view emphasise the "balancing of interacting and often competing forces" (Smircich, 1983b:228).

- Structures are implicit in the operation of social systems. The "problem" (Parsons and Smelser, 1956:16) of social analysis implies the identification of functions, which the various elements of structure perform. In Parsons' (1961:37) view:

"The values of the organisation legitimise its existence as a system. But more specifically they legitimise the main functional patterns of operation which are necessary to implement the values, in this case the system goal, under typical conditions of the concrete situation".

Elsewhere, Parsons (1951:27) writes, "if a system is to constitute a persistent order or to undergo an orderly process of developmental change, certain functional pre-requisites must be met". In both contexts, Parsons conceives functional imperatives as super-ordinate. Etzioni (1961:2) supports this premise when he states:

"A comparison of Parsons' articles shows that the basic question illuminated is the special form of structure which organisations employ in 'solving' the generic functional problems of social units. The question of balance recurs: the instrumental processes of adaptation to the environment and of goal implementation have to be balanced by the expressive processes of social and normative integration".

As Etzioni points out, the normative approach implied in Parsons' view is concerned with the issue of stability. Burrell and Morgan (1979:55) argue Parsons' normative position as "inherently conservative, geared to a reaffirmation of the status quo, unable to deal with change". Once again, an ethos of equilibrium is implied (and as such is not organic). This view is shared by Selznick (1961:25) who characterises the structural functionalist ethic as "analysis relating contemporary and variable behaviour to a presumptively stable system of needs and mechanisms". In a similar vein, Stacey (1993:169) asserts that:

"Because an organisation is a complex system, attempts to plan its long-term future and plan changes in its culture and behaviour patterns are likely to prompt counter-forces and lead to little change at all or to unexpected and unintended changes. The very structure of a complex system makes it impossible to plan its specific long-term future".

Stacey's (1993:167) view of structure in the sense of "complex organisations" introduces the image of organisations as systems. The systems metaphor is attributed to von Bertalanffy's (1956) and Boulding's (1956) separate works on General System Theory during the 1950's. Three assumptions underlying the systems metaphor of organisations are that they are "composed of a set of interdependent parts; have needs for survival; and behave and take action" (Silverman, 1970:27). Systems thinking has developed dramatically (Checkland, 1999; Checkland and Scholes, 1990) but the assumptions of holism and interdependence are a recurring theme. Euske and Roberts (1987:48) refers to these three assumptions in terms of:

- "process - the processes that shape patterned activity into stable but changing organisation structures;

- wholeness - the view of organisations as part of a larger system and composed of smaller sub systems; and
- boundary - the relationship between the organisation and its environment".

The boundary issue gives rise to two different ways for imagining the organisation system; either closed or open (Morgan, 1997:39). A closed system metaphor creates an image of organisation as 'centre stage' in which "extra-organisational factors are ignored" (Silverman, 1970:32). This underpins Classical Management thinking described above. In contrast, an open system metaphor creates an image of organisation as "a system in exchange of matter with its environment, presenting import and export, building-up and breaking-down of its material components" (von Bertalanffy, 1968:149).

A systems view of organisation "is not intrinsically tied to any specific view of reality, except insofar as its general positivist orientation implies a social world characterised by some form of order and regularity which can be captured in the notion of system" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:68). The systems metaphor accommodates the thinking implied in both the machines and organic metaphors. Checkland and Holwell (1998:48), for example, distinguish between two broad information system traditions based on what they term "hard" and "soft" thinking as indicated in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: Two Broad Traditions of Information Systems Work

	The 'hard' tradition (Simon)	The 'soft' tradition (Vickers)
Concept of organisation	Social entities which set up and seek to achieve goals	Social entities which seek to manage relationships
Concept of information system	An aid to decision making in pursuit of goals	A part of interpreting the world, sense making with respect to it, in relation to managing relationships
Underlying systems thinking	'Hard' systems thinking: the world assumed to be systemic	'Soft' systems thinking: the process of inquiry into the world assumed to be capable of being organised a system

Source: Checkland and Holwell (1998:48)

While Checkland and Holwell (1998) ground the distinction between systems thinking based on functionalist ("hard") and interpretivist ("soft") assumptions, both share a concern for holism and interdependence. Checkland (1999:A49) conveys this sentiment in distinguishing the two types of thinking on the basis of the attribution of systemicity (having the property of system-like characteristics):

"Hard systems thinking assumes that the world is a set of systems and that these can be systematically engineered to achieve objectives. In the soft tradition, the world is assumed to be problematic, but it is also assumed that the process of inquiry into the problematic situations that make up the process of inquiry to be systemic".

Silverman (1970:3) describes the latent assumptions behind the systems metaphor in the following way. "The approach begins with the assumption of the inter-relatedness of apparently isolated phenomena which underlay the critique of early organisational theory. It goes on to examine the needs for survival and adjustment of all systems and to specify the self regulating mechanisms which systems use to satisfy these needs".

Burrell and Morgan (1979:220) assert that "the adoption of an open systems approach has been mistakenly regarded as synonymous with the use of an organismic analogy". They continue by suggesting that "organismic models (metaphor) which presume a functional unity of system parts, with certain imperative functions which must be satisfied if the organisation is to survive, are constrained by the requirements characteristic of a managerial point of view".

The notion of a managerial world view is characteristic of the functionalist perspective. From this view, the world in which individuals live is assumed to exist independently of the individual's awareness of it. "The individual is seen as being born into and living within a social world which has a reality of its own ... it is not something than an individual creates, rather it exists out there" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:5). As such, the social world is construed on assumptions of order and predictability, in much the same manner as the physical world is construed.

A further aspect of the systems metaphor of organisation concerns the social context in which the idea emerged. Hales (1993:100) asserts that the systems image of organisation emerged at a time where there was "growth in literacy, urbanisation and an increase in formal political freedoms". Hales (1993:10) signifies this period as "the advent in 'modern' ways of thinking, characterised by mechanical understanding, measurement, analysis, abstraction, means-ends relationships and procedures".

Smircich and Calas (1987:247) argue that the "notion of opposition is central to the labeling of events or activities as modern ... modernism refers to activities that present an opposition to the dominant versions of what is 'true' or 'good'". Hence, the systems metaphor for organisation, while building upon thinking in the mechanistic and organic views, represents an opposition to the dominant view of what is 'real'. Thus, General Systems Theory signifies the period at which modernist thinking was discerned from Classical thinking; a view shared by Smircich and Calas (1987).

Given its significance in terms of a beacon signifying the period of modernism, further consideration of the systems view is warranted. The view of organisations as systems sees "behaviour as the consequence of the interaction of social and technical factors both within the organisation itself and between the organisation and the environment" (Bennett, 1997:37). As such, organisation is viewed as a conglomerate of interacting systems. Hatch (1997:39) puts it in the following way. "The general system view is one of systems operating within systems operating within systems ... every system has a sub system, but it is also a sub system of a larger system".

Burrell and Morgan (1979:158) relate sub systems thinking to "Parsons' four functional imperatives" of societies. There is general agreement in the literature on four principal organisational sub systems (Burnes, 1992:156; Bennett, 1997:267). These are the:

- organisational goals and values sub system;
- technical sub system;
- psychosocial sub system; and
- managerial sub system.

Katz and Kahn (1966:87) assert that maintenance systems (psychosocial sub systems) are concerned with explaining factors which "preserve a steady state or equilibrium". They continue by suggesting that "this may take the form of:

- a tendency towards organisational rigidity, the preservation of the status quo in absolute terms; or
- preserving patterns of existing relationships by adjustments of processes and parts according to some constant ratio of energetic transaction".

Thus, while the functional imperative thinking of Parsons is concerned with the notion of 'survival', sub systems thinking is concerned with the related notion of 'equilibrium'.

Bennett (1977:267) describes the interrelationship of the sub systems as follows.

"An organisation receives inputs of information, materials, human and other resources from the external environment, and transforms these into outputs of services and/or goods, which are then returned to the outside world. Technology determines the character of the inputs used and outputs created and the techniques by which inputs are transformed into outputs. Social factors affect how technology is applied".

The four organisational sub systems provide a basis for discerning areas of interest in the organisation literature. Scientific Management theorists are interested in the technical and managerial functional imperatives, Human Relations theorists in the psychosocial functional imperative, while Contingency theorists are interested in all four imperatives.

While differences in perspectives can be identified in terms of specific areas of interest, an underlying premise aligning them is the belief that organisation exists independent of individuals' knowledge of it. Organisation, along with the elements impacting upon and within it, is a structural thing that can be observed, measured and rationalised.

INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON ORGANISATION

Differing views on information provide a premise for distinguishing different modes of thinking on organisation. For example, Burrell and Morgan (1979:100) point out that on the one hand information may be viewed as "an entity that exists some place or flows from one place to another". Alternatively, information can be conceptualised in 'relational' terms.

"Information is a carrier of meaning ... It emerges from a network of interaction among individuals in which information is selectively perceived and interpreted in accordance with the meaning it holds for the actors involved" Burrell and Morgan (1979:100).

Assertions of organisational rationality are challenged on the basis of subjective notions of 'reality'. For example, functionalist thinking on organisation demonstrates the persuasive influence of the paradigm in the development of organisational theory. Weick (1969:10) suggests that this is not surprising given "organisational literature has its roots in economic theory, and rationality is a prominent concept in economic models". Johnson (2000:404) takes the view that the problem rests with the "more rational approaches to strategic decision making being more readily understood by managers and can be easily employed". Viewing organisation, along with the elements that impact upon and within it, in terms of meanings emerging from the organisational members interaction processes challenges the 'taken for grantedness' of management practice. In other words, it is this processual view which challenges the rational, structural view of organisation.

A subjective view of organisation is illustrated in the following definition of Bouwen and Fry (1991:38). "A negotiated social reality with a certain degree of shared meaning". Bouwen and Fry advocate a *process* orientation to organisational life. This view is supported by Gray (*et al*, 1985:83) who conceive organisations as "dynamic processes through which meaning is simultaneously constructed and

destroyed". Gray (et al, 1985) reject the notion of organisations as static structures. The culture metaphor for organisation is too static, in the sense that it emphasises those aspects of process through which meanings are constructed and sustained. In Gray (et al, 1985:83) the view stated is that "focusing on what is stable and permanent about organisation loses sight of the precariousness of organisational life".

Weick (1969:1) adds to the perspective by suggesting that "there are processes which create, maintain and dissolve social collectives, that these processes constitute the work of organising, and that the ways in which these processes are continuously executed are the organisation". Weick (1969:17) argues that the tangible (rational) features of organisations are not important, "rather their importance lies solely in the shape they give to the processes that occur". Rather than the term organisation, which implies structural elements, Weick adopts the term *organising* which implies processes. Mumby (1988:7) explains the difference between the two terms as follows:

"The term organising reflects the ongoing, spontaneous, processual nature of organisational life. Through the process of organising, members actively construct their environment. The term organisation, on the other hand, suggests a more static, structured, and finished quality of organisations which cultural theorists wish to avoid".

Jelinek (et al, 1983:338) support adoption of the term "organising" in the sense "it expands the old implicit models of machines or organisms to include the newer model of social process that persist and change over time".

"It is important to emphasise that the shift is not just from one noun to another (as from machine to organism) but from noun to verb (from organisation to organising)."

Perspectives based on a process view of organisation bear allegiance to "symbolic interactionism", coined by Blumer in 1937 (Blumer, 1969). Blumer (1969:1) describes the term as a "somewhat barbaric neologism, coined in an offhand way, that somehow caught on and is now general in use".

The symbolic interactionism approach is based on the assumption that "social phenomena are explainable and predictable by the socially acquired psychical

interpretations that participants reciprocally assign to their physical behaviours" (Wallace 1988:49). In the words of Blumer (1962:180):

"Human beings interpret or 'define' each other's actions instead of merely reacting to each other's actions. Their 'response' is not made directly to the actions of one another but instead is based on the meanings which they attach to such actions. Thus, human interaction is mediated by the use of symbols, by interpretation, or by ascertaining the meaning of one another's action"

Preston (1987:83) puts it more simply when he states, "individuals act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them". Meanings are not conceived as facts in the traditional sense, rather socially constructed through processes of interpretation of phenomenon and from interactions with others.

The nomenclature "symbolic interpretive" (Krone, *et al.*, 1987; Putnam and Poole, 1987) is not well established in the social science discourse. The commonly used nomenclature is "symbolic interactionism" (Blumer 1969). Krone (*et al.*, 1987:27) point out that "symbolic interpretivism is similar to symbolic interactionism in the assumptions it makes about the self, shared meanings and social behaviour, however, is distinguished from symbolic interactionism in that the former is explicitly communicative". Consequently, while the label 'symbolic interpretive' reflects its broader philosophical foundation, Krone (*et al.*, 1987:20), drawing on Fisher's (1978) assertion that the "psychological perspective of communication is not psychology", claims a basis for its uniqueness. In other words, the symbolic interpretive perspective of communication is not symbolic interactionism.

Hatch (1997:41) explains the symbolic interpretive approach as follows:

"Human social order is produced through interpersonal negotiations and implicit understandings that are built up via shared history and shared experience. What sustains social order is at least partial consensus about how things are to be perceived and the meanings for which they stand. Through interpretation, members of society make patterns of meaning out of their activities in the world, and then assume that the patterns they impose exist apart from the interpretations that produced them".

Hatch's (1997) primary interest in interpretation and communication is emphasised in Krone (et al, 1987:27) understanding of the symbolic interpretivism perspective.

"Organisational communications consist of patterns of coordinated behaviours that have the capacity to create, maintain and dissolve organisations. Rather than passively submitting to some organisationally determined view of the workplace, the symbolic interpretive perspective posits that by virtue of their ability to communicate, individuals are capable of creating and shaping their own social reality".

Given that the face-to-face interview is the primary data source, the study adopts the symbolic interpretive nomenclature.

In summary, difference in perspectives on organisation (in Weick's (1969) case, organising) and its constitutive elements can be characterised on the basis of assumptions that underlie action and hence, understanding. The issue for this study concerns an appropriate methodology on which to gain insights on the thinking embedded within the research data. As the study investigates the alignment in a customer focus premise-to-received practice relationship, it is the meanings individuals attribute to actions in both contexts that are of interest. As such, the symbolic interpretive view has high currency for the study. In developing an argument based on the interpretive paradigm, the study neither rejects the works of positivists, nor attempts to ignite the "British paradigm war of the 1970's" (Connell and Nord, 1996:407). Rather, the study's interest "aims to elicit individuals' points of view and to interpret how different cultural constructions of reality affect social action" (Smircich and Calas 1987:247).

As such, an operational definition for the concept of organisations is based on Weick's (1969:1) notion of organising. In this study, organisation is taken to mean "the processes continually executed which create, maintain and dissolve social collectives and which constitute the work of organising". As such, investigating the premise to received practice relationship views organisation as a form of interaction (Heller, 1998). It is the pattern of regularities in thinking gained from interviewing Workers and Top Management Teams which provides evidence for analysing the alignment between what organisations say they do with what they are perceived to do concerning customer focus. This premise is supported by Bouwen and Fry (1991:38) who assert that "the key process to be understood in the social construction

process is social discourse". Social discourse is viewed as "the critical factor in constructing the 'organising' that is taking place" (Bouwen and Fry, 1991:38).

Embedding 'organisation environment' in the study context

Organisation environment theories are relevant to the study as the agent of change to a customer focus orientation is the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO). On this basis, adoption of strategic actions by agencies is in response to external forces. As the following discussion illustrates, the lens through which one views the external force creates unique and diverse explanations. It is different perspectives within the functionalist approach that the study initially takes up.

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON ORGANISATION ENVIRONMENT

Traditional views on organisational environments vary from simplistic to complex. A general way of viewing the environment is provided by Hawley (1950:5) in terms of "all factors external to the organism [in this context metaphor for organisation] and exerting an influence on its behaviour" (Hawley, 1950:5). More complex conceptions for organisation environments do so on the basis of distinctive elements. Hatch (1997:64), sorts these elements on three levels:

- The inter-organisational network. The complex web of relationships between significant actors in which a group or organisation is embedded including suppliers, consumers, customers, competitors, unions, regulatory agencies and special interest groups;
- The general environment. The forces linking the group or organisation to the environment including social, cultural, legal, political, economic, technological and physical sectors; and
- The international and global environment. Aspects of the environment which cross national boundaries or that are organised on a global scale including the United Nations, GATT (General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs) and international consulting firms.

The differences in organisation environment perspectives can be attributed to changes in conceptions of organisations. Scott (1987:29) discerns three main approaches in the way in which organisations are viewed as follows:

"There is the rational system - which views organisations as highly formalised collectives oriented to the pursuit of specific goals; the natural system - which views organisations as collectives seeking to survive; and the open system - which views organisations as coalitions of interest groups, highly influenced by their environment".

In terms of metaphor, Scott's (1987) assertion underpins changes in thinking about organisation from mechanistic to more organic forms. In other words, the simplistic view of organisation environment fits well with the closed-system rationalists thinking implicit in Classical/Scientific Management (Taylor, 1947; Weber, 1947; Fayol, 1949). Burnes (1992:28) describes this thinking in terms of "a shared belief that once organisations have structured themselves in accordance with correct precepts, then, regardless of internal or even external developments, no further changes are necessary or desirable".

More complex views of organisation environment fit within open-systems perspectives of organisation. Contingency Theory (Galbraith, 1973; Child, 1984; Scott, 1987) and Weick's (1969) psychological model of 'organising' are exemplars of the open systems approach. Scott (1987:23) describes the open system perspective in the following way.

"Rather than viewing the organisation as a coherent system of relations oriented to the pursuit of specific goals, we might view it more accurately as an opportunistic collection of divergent interest groups temporarily branded together. Organisations therefore are defined as coalitions of shifting interest groups that develop goals by negotiation; the structure of the coalition, its activities, and its outcomes are strongly influenced by environmental factors".

Burns and Stalker's (1961) work on the relationship between organisation structure and environment challenges traditional modes of thinking on organisational practice. Their assertion that "the beginning of administrative wisdom is the awareness that there is no one optimum type of management system" (Burns and Stalker, 1961:125), emphasises the importance of the environment. Four main schools of relationships thinking can be identified within the literature.

- Contingency Theory - based on the belief that the structure and function of organisations' are contingent on the variables and conditions that each faces.

Galbraith (1973:2), drawing on the works of Burns and Stalker (1961), Woodward (1965), Chandler (1966) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967) clarify two assumptions underlying contingency theory thinking.

- i) *"There is no best way to organise; and*
- ii) *any way of organising is not equally effective".*

Scott (1987:87) posits a third.

- iii) *"The best way to organise depends on the nature of the environment to which the organisation relates".*

This leads Burke and Litwin (1992:525) to characterise contingency theory as an "it all depends" approach, in that "organisational effectiveness is, in part, contingent on the degree of match between the organisation's external environment (whether static or dynamic) and the organisation's internal structure (either mechanistic or organic)".

As such, contingency theory is a departure from the Classical approach, which advocates a one best way for all organisations. Its similarity with Classical thinking lies in the belief that "organisational structures are the result of rational decisions by managers seeking to administer organisations effectively, implying an adaptation of structures to varying situations" (Aldrich and Marsden, 1988:373). In other words, management techniques stress rational decision planning for the purposes of control.

- Resource Dependency Theory - based on the belief that organisation survival is dependent upon the availability of resources and services from the environment. The environment is perceived to exert power over organisations in terms that "it sets the stage for the distribution of power" (Euske and Roberts, 1987:52). Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976:83) describe the theory in the following way:

"The resource dependency model proceeds from the indisputable position that organisations are not able to internally generate either all the resources or functions required to maintain themselves, and therefore organisations must enter into

transactions and relations with elements in the environment that can supply the required resources and services".

Aldrich and Pfeffer (1976:83) continue by describing the role of the administrator as "managing their environments as well as their organisations, and the former activity may be as important, or even more important, than the latter". In other words, the organisation environment relationship is taken from the view of management looking outward from the organisation to elements surrounding it.

- Population Ecology - based on the belief that all organisations compete within the environment for scarce and critical resources. Hawley's (1950:69) thinking on "human ecology" has high currency with population ecologists as illustrated in the following quotation:

"The elements of human culture are identical in principle with the appetency of the bee for honey, the nest-building activities of birds, and the hunting habits of carnivora. To say that the latter are instinctive while the former are not is to beg the question. Ecology is not concerned with how habits are acquired - that is a psychological problem; it is interested rather in the functions they serve and the relationships they involve".

Population ecology is similar to resource dependency theory in the belief that the environment exerts power over organisations through competition for resources. It differs in that organisations are viewed from the perspective of the environment. As Scott (1987:110) puts it, "the population ecology model differs from other approaches to organisations in that it applies primarily to *populations* or organisations rather than to individual units".

Smelser (1988:110) characterises the population ecology view as "frankly biological, specifically Darwinian", in that the principal of survival of the fittest assumes the environment selects organisations on the basis of fitness. Fitness means those organisations that best serve the needs of the environment will be supported with resources and thus, survive.

- Institutional Theory - based on the view of environments exerting influence over organisations from the perspective of the environment, but that this

influence stems from social and cultural demands rather than demands for resources. In the institutional perspective, "organisations are open systems - strongly influenced by their environments - but that many of the fateful forces are the result not of rational pressures for more effective performance but of social and cultural pressures to conform to conventional beliefs" (Scott, 1987:115). Meyer and Rowan (1994:472) simply put the position as follows:

"The formal structures of many organisations in postindustrial society dramatically reflect the myths of their institutional environments instead of the demands of their activities".

Meyer and Rowan (1994) allude to what Pfeffer (1982:239) terms institutionalisation; "the social processes, obligations or actualities which come to take on a rule like status in social thought and action". Institutionalisation theory posits "organisations conform to the expectations of the environment by adapting 'appropriate' (rational) structures and behaviours. In response, the organisation is deemed legitimate by its environment and receives the needed resources (financial support, generalised acceptance)" (Euske and Roberts, 1987:58).

On the basis of the argument above, Hatch (1997:84) asserts that "not only organisations, but actions can be conceptualised as institutions of the societies in which they are repeated and given similar meanings". However, Euske and Roberts (1987:58) point out, "a fundamental argument of institutional theory is that an organisation's structure does not necessarily support the work that goes on in the organisation". As such, the alignment between structure and practice can be seen as incongruent, a concept explored in the section on social structure.

Thus, the organisation environment relations literature provides different frameworks for thinking about organisations when the focus of interest is on control or productivity.

A mechanistic view of organisations is based on the "conception that all phenomena are ultimately aggregates of fortuitous actions of elementary physical units" (von Bertalanffy, 1968:88). The role of the managers is to design, build and operate the specialised routines to deliver high performance. Workers are viewed as being

"motivated primarily by economic forces, and ordinarily inefficient and wasteful" (Handy, 1976:329).

Organic perspectives of organisations acknowledge the importance of the external environment, in particular its changing circumstances. Organisations most suited to changing circumstances are those which emphasise flexibility rather than stability. In order to adapt to changes in the environment, advantages gained through routinisation and standardisation must break down. Managerial emphasis is therefore directed on innovation and adaptation to ensure organisational survival.

The milestone in the development of contingency theory rests with Woodward's (1965) work on technology and social structure. The contingency theory approach has as its underlying premise that "context and structure must somehow fit together if the organisation is to perform well" (Drazin and Van de Ven, 1994:35). For example, Burns and Stalker (1961) link mechanistic forms of organisation with stable environments and organic forms with more turbulent, changing environments. Pfeffer (1982:162) sums up the thinking embedded within contingency thinking in the following way:

"In its prediction of organisational performance or effectiveness resulting from the congruence between elements of the organisation's context and its structure, an interaction is being specified".

The assertion applies equally to the resource dependency, population ecology or institutional perspectives. In other words, each perspective objectifies the organisation and its environment as though they were real and tangible entities.

What is of interest at this point are similarities in thinking embedded within the different notions of organisation environment relations. Regardless of whether the organisation environment relationship is viewed from the contingency, resource dependency, population ecology or institutional perspectives, similarity in view rests on two counts:

- bounded rational decisions concerning environmental functional imperatives; and
- a basic concern for organisational survival.

Although different organisation environment relations can be identified, the premise linking the views is the objective, "world taken-for-granted" (Schutz, 1964) nature of

organisations. Organisations are viewed as objects of analysis, differing on the basis of level of analysis as delineated within the systems framework.

Proposals for level of analysis vary across the literature. For example, Scott (1987:119) proposes three levels of analysis for organisations: psychological; structural; and ecological. Within the ecological, which is principally concerned with organisation environments, Scott (1987:141) proposes four sub-levels of analysis: organisational set; organisational population; area organisational field; and functional organisational field. In contrast, Wilson (1992:11) proposes five levels of analysis: "individual; group; organisation; business sector; and whole economy". The issue concerns not what is the correct nomenclature, rather how differences in thinking as evident at the dimension of discourse can, at the more abstract dimension of paradigm, be seen as closely related. More meaningful interpretation is gained from characterising differences in thinking at the level of paradigm.

Challenging the above mentioned functionalist perspectives is the view of organisation environment as a social construction. From this perspective, changes in the environment are viewed as individuals reactions to changes in perceptions of the environment. The issue surfacing concerns whether environments have an "objective presence independent of the observer, or whether they affect organisations chiefly through the way they are perceived by participants" (Aldrich and Marsden, 1988:372). The notion of environments affecting organisations by the way they are perceived by individuals challenges functionalist thinking of organisation environments.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON ORGANISATION ENVIRONMENT

At the level of paradigm, standing in stark contrast to an objective view of organisation environment is the socially constructed view of reality. Weick (1969:65) argues that "the human creates the environment to which the system then adapts. The human actor does not react to an environment, he creates it". In other words, "while the modernist views the environment as controlling the organisation, an enactment view see individuals constructing environments and then responding to their constructions as if the environment they created was forcing them to do so" (Hatch, 1997:94).

The belief of a socially constructed reality is embedded in the following quotations. "Organisations don't react to their environment, people do" (Silverman, 1970:37). "Organisations don't think, people do" (Gioia and Sims, 1986:1). Such views direct attention to the role of the individual in creating and reproducing the environments in which they live. Using Silverman's thinking, organisations do not react to the environment, rather it is perceptions of individuals about the environment which creates the reaction. Similarly, using Gioia and Sims' thinking, organisations do not think, rather it is perceptions of individuals about uncertainty in the environment which creates uncertainty. Silverman (1970:4) passionately asserts:

"To use concepts of organisational needs and of a system's self regulating activities in any way other than as a heuristic device is inadmissible since it implies that the power of thought and action may reside in social constructs".

On the basis of Silverman's (1970) argument, observations of reaction and certainty can be viewed as products or constructions of peoples' minds. Pfeffer (1982:10) conceptualises the phenomenon as follows:

"Action is governed by the systems of meaning that emerge and develop within the social structure to provide understanding of the social world, and through the development of a shared perspective and negotiated order, they provide stability and cohesion for those within the system".

An organisation's environment is not so much a tangible entity "readily open to description and definition" (Wilson, 1992:25), rather it is a "situation made routine or well understood through a history of shared understanding" (Huber and Daft, 1987:152). As such, thinking on organisation environment relations is not in terms of environmental influences but on organisation internal processes which influence how the external environment is interpreted.

Huber and Daft (1987:150) explain how the external environment is interpreted and understood based on two principles:

- "Human beings not only receive information they also give meanings to its content - information is interpreted; and
- Interpretation is affected by communications among members - shared meanings develop within organisations through interaction".

A view of organisation environment relations which involves interpretation of meanings, interaction amongst members of a system, and shared understanding, underpins the symbolic interpretive perspective of organisation. In more elaborate terms, "organisation environments are the symbolic context that give meanings to members" (Tompkins, 1987:85). Tompkins (1987:84) develops his assertion of organisation environments as symbolic contexts using Schein's (1985) position of neutrality in that "even though an actual environment 'may or may not exist', it occupies a secondary position in relation to the symbolic".

Returning to the contextual element giving rise to the discussion on organisation environment relations, the picture painted for the agent of change to customer focus was an influential force from the external environment. As such, an open-system view of organisations is relevant. However, given that the focus of interest for the study is the alignment between what organisations say they do and what they are perceived to do, investigation of process elements are more meaningful than constructions premised on control or effectiveness.

Adopting Weick's (1969) enactment view of the environment, the need for change results, not from elements within the environment, rather, from within the minds of individuals who perceive the need for change. Duncan's (1972:325) study on 22 decision groups in three manufacturing and three research and development organisations lead him to conclude:

"Uncertainty and the degree of complexity and dynamics of the environment should not be considered as constant features in an organisation. Rather they are dependent on the perceptions of organisation members and thus can vary in their incidence to the extent that individuals differ in their perceptions".

Duncan's (1972) conclusion supports Weick's (1979:164) enactment view in the sense that "managers construct, rearrange, single out, and demolish many objective features of their surroundings. When people act, they unrandomise variables, insert vestiges of orderliness, and literally create their own constraints".

Scott (1987:134) uses this premise of Weick (and by association the conclusion drawn by Duncan, 1972) to illustrate a point of departure from the symbolic interpretive perspective:

"Whereas symbolic interactionists emphasise the extent to which reality is interpersonally negotiated, Weick stresses the individual, cognitive aspects of process by which people, often alone, actively 'put' things out there that they then perceive and negotiate about perceiving".

This study adopts the symbolic interpretive perspective in the sense of alignment in meaning between two organisational contexts - the premise and the received practice. Accordingly, the study investigates the extent to which customer focus has been interpersonally negotiated between the contexts of talk (what organisations say they do) and walk (what organisations are perceived to do).

Consequently, the symbolic interpretive view of organisation environments illuminates new areas of study for understanding the premise to received practice relationship. This is achieved through analysis of the meanings individuals hold towards customer focus. The view of customer focus as an influence from the external environment is limited on the basis that the environment is assumed to be "ready made" (Weick, 1969:27). Alternatively, by investigating the meanings individuals attribute to an enacted environment to which they then adapt, a richer source of interpretation is gained.

Based on Weick's (1969:28) assertion that "the environment is a phenomenon tied to the processes of attention", customer focus can only be 'real' because individuals have made it so. In other words, customer focus is enacted in the environment by the process of attention and it is this enacted view to which individuals react. Where premise is strong, plausible, relevant and acceptable, enactment is likely to happen or premise will manifest as 'in-use'. If not, then there will be non-alignment.

The second of the core concepts organisational theorists rely upon to construct their theories is strategy.

Embedding 'strategy' in the study context

Customer focus was delivered to public sector agencies as a strategic thrust. Strategy, therefore, is important and needs to be related to theory.

The discussion on functionalist thinking on organisation environment relationships posited the notion of environments influencing organisations regardless of the

organisations awareness of it. For example, the assertion within resource dependency theory is that the environment impacts on the distribution of power within the organisation in terms of individual's abilities to acquire needed resources. Similarly, the thinking embedded within population ecology theory is that organisations which best serve the needs of the environment will be supported and thus survive. Likewise, the thinking implied in institutional theory is that the environment influences organisational survival through demands on how organisations should look and how they should behave.

Functionalist thinking on strategy assumes a type of environmental determinism, however the notion is furthered by way of attention to "intentionality and self awareness" (Hatch, 1997:103). In other words, strategy is viewed as the "alignment of the organisation with its environment" (Dent, 1990) by way of the related notion of decision making. Intentionality and self awareness are implicit in contingency theory thinking. Burrell and Morgan (1979:176) articulate the core to the perspective as follows.

"Contingency theory postulates that the effectiveness of the organisation in coping with the demands of its environment is contingent upon the elements of the various sub-systems which comprise the organisation being designed in accordance with the demands of the environment with which they interact; which implies they must be congruent".

By way of introduction, discourse on strategy is influenced by individuals' perception on the nature of organisation. With each perspective, a different image of strategy emerges calling to bear differing underlying assumptions. Consequently, arguments on strategy closely align with differences in perspectives on organisation discussed previously. Strategy theories are relevant to the study as customer focus can be viewed as an imposed course of action prescribed by government for agencies to achieve specified outcomes of "enhanced service delivery and value for money service for the community" (PSMO, 1996).

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON STRATEGY

Discourse on strategy occupies an area of inquiry in its own right. Reification of the concept directs individuals' thinking to assume strategy as a tangible feature of organisational life. Functionalist thinking has taken the concept further, to the extent that it is perceived not only in terms of a social fact, but also as an objective feature

of organisation. This thinking is particularly evident in discourse where the focus of interest is in explaining strategy in the form of a rational plan; "a process of formulation and implementation" (Andrews, 1991:45). Further developments in thinking see strategy not in terms of a process, rather the outcome of a process. From this perspective, the focus of interest is in explaining the decisions and later day processes which emerge in developing strategy. In short, "traditional notions of strategic management would have it that strategies are developed through an analytic/ evaluative mechanism. It is a notion rooted in a scientific view of management with managers positioned essentially as cerebral planners" (Johnson, 2000:404).

While a detailed analysis of the strategy discourse is not warranted in this context, interest for the study is in bringing to the surface different cultural elements comprising the concept on which to align espoused strategy with strategy in practice. It is from this perspective that the strategy discourse is analysed. In other words, thinking on strategy is analysed from the perspective of the underlying assumptions implicit in the way in which the notion is put into motion.

Origins for developments in thinking on strategy are linked with the military world (Burnes, 1992; Quinn, 1992). Mintzberg (1992a:12) provides a military perspective of strategy citing the work of Von Clausewitz (1976):

"Drafting the plan of war ... shaping the individual campaigns and within these, deciding in the individual engagements".

The image of the 'war machine' can be likened to images of the 'bureaucratic machine' from the Classical perspectives of Taylor (1947) and Weber (1947).

Within the functionalist literature on strategy, two distinctive views are identified; strategy as a process, and strategy as an outcome of a process.

Strategy as a process is closely associated with mechanistic images of organisation. From this perspective, strategy is depicted as the "linear, sequential, orderly activity initiated by a powerful executive or group" (Dent, 1990:8). This rational approach typically involves "decision taking in the pursuit of goals or objectives" (Checkland, 1999:A6)". Rowe (*et al*, 1990:66) capture the sentiments conveyed in these views by defining strategy as "the set of goals and objectives an organisation is to pursue, including the plans, policies, and standards of conduct, and the courses of action, and

tasks which are pursued for at least one cycle of rhythm of planning in that business".

Implied in Rowe's (et al, 1990) definition for strategy are two distinct, interrelated phases of activity; formulation and implementation. For Andrews (1991:46-47), formulation involves decision about what organisations:

- "might do - identifying the opportunities and risks in the environment;
- can do - identifying the range of strategic alternatives;
- want to do - narrowing the range of alternatives by recognising the constraints imposed by corporate capability; and
- should do - determining one or more economic strategies at acceptable levels of risk".

Andrews (1991:46) describes implementation as essentially a series of administrative activities which involve:

- "mobilising resources to accomplish the selected strategy;
- aligning the organisation structure for efficient performance through information systems and relationships which permit coordination of sub activities; and
- enmeshing the organisational processes of performance measurement, compensation and management, into systems of incentives and controls that are directed toward the kind of behaviours required by organisational purpose".

Winter (1987:160) embellishes Andrews' (1991) notions of formulation and implementation by defining strategy as the:

"Summary account of the principal characteristics and relationships of the organisation and its environment - an account developed for the purpose of informing decisions and affecting the organisations success and survival".

Emerging from the views on strategy is the assumption that strategy emanates from the formal leadership of the organisation. Mintzberg and Quinn (1991:43) note that this premise underlies most of the prescriptive literature on strategic management". From this stance, strategy can be imagined as the reciprocal relationship between managerial determinism as influenced by environmental determinism. In other

words, strategy is the design attempts by managers to achieve organisational fit or predetermined outcomes, as needed by the environment. Dent (1990:5) puts this stance into perspective when he writes:

"Strategy is thought to constitute a logic underlying an organisations interactions with its environment, and this in turn guides its deployment of resources".

Kotter and Heskett (1992:4) support this view by defining strategy simply as "a logic for how to achieve movement in some direction".

Logic, as referred to by Dent (1990) and Kotter and Heskett (1992), refers to the rational processes of formulation and implementation. Emphasis is on ensuring organisation survival which assumes a systems orientation in thinking.

Shifting the focus of interest in the rational process point of view is the notion of strategy as emerging from organisational activities. From this perspective, strategy is viewed as the pattern in a stream of decisions and actions (Mintzberg, 1991:13; Dent, 1990:5). As such, strategy is the direction the organisation takes rather than the plan it produces. In other words, "strategy is the outcome of the decisions a firm takes in terms of deploying and constructing its organisational capability, rather than the cause" (Burnes, 1992:93). From this perspective, the direction an organisation takes "can be influenced by strategic planning via the rational model, but is shaped by other influences as well" (Hatch, 1997:113).

The 'other influences' referred to by Hatch (1997) include the "four functional imperatives" (Burns and Stalker, 1961) which must be met adequately if equilibrium and/or continuing existence of the system is to be maintained. From this perspective, strategy is subordinate to the organisation's functional imperatives.

The emergent view of strategy is based on more organic views of organisation. This leads Burnes (1992:94) to assert that open systems thinking has led to the view of strategy as "attaining the appropriate internal arrangements which allow a company to pursue success effectively". Likewise, Porter (1998:60) suggests "success is more and more a function of making choices". Strategy is distinguished from the rational perspective in that structure not only follows strategy, it also influences strategy. However, similarity exists between the two approaches in that organisation is viewed as a system of decision making processes. Mintzberg (1992a:15) for example,

considers rational and emergent strategies as two poles of a strategy process continuum. Within this continuum, he proposes nine different kinds of strategies. Rather than consider each kind, only the two lying closest to the poles are relevant for the present argument. These two types are:

- "Planned strategy. Precise intentions are formulated and articulated by a central leadership, and backed up by formal controls to ensure their surprise-free implementation in an environment that is benign, controllable, or predictable. These strategies are highly deliberate.
- Imposed strategy. The external environment dictates patterns in actions, either through direct imposition or through implicitly pre-empting or bounding organisational choice. These strategies are organisationally emergent, although they may be internalised and made deliberate" (Mintzberg, 1992a:15).

In Mintzberg's view, rational and emergent strategies are partial views of the same world view (Morgan, 1980). For example, while rational strategy implies organisation as a tool of management and emergent strategy implies organisation as an adaptive organism, both are concerned with a regulation of human affairs. Further, the linking of the two approaches into the one continuum underpins the ideal of rationality in that strategy making is a concern of managers in dealing with influences from within and external to, the organisation. Consequently, strategy is viewed in objective terms in which social phenomena can be explained.

Related to strategy is the notion of organisational goals. Literature on organisational goals conveys a sense of notoriety - "one of the most confusing and controversial topics in management literature" (Van de Ven, 1980:549) - "is among the most slippery and treacherous concepts of all those employed by organisational analysts" (Scott, 1987:268). Notwithstanding, goals are intertwined with strategy, principally in context with decision making. It is on this basis that goals require further consideration.

Simon (1964:1) conceives the notion of goals in the following way:

"The goal of action is seldom unitary, but generally consists of a whole set of constraints the action must satisfy. It appears convenient to use the term 'organisational goal' to refer to constraints, or sets of constraints,

imposed by the organisational role, that have only an indirect relation with the personal motives of the individual who fills the role"

The interest with Simon's argument is in the way he distinguishes between organisational goals and individual goals. Scott (1987:269) clarifies the difference by suggesting "individual goals govern the decision to join or remain in an organisation, while organisational goals are expected to govern the decisions of individuals as participants". Mindful of Gioia and Sims' (1986) assertion that it is people who think and not organisations, Simon's argument is viewed as supporting an underlying assumption of a managerial bias. As such, goals are subject to "calculable manipulation, an instrument of rational action" (Selznick, 1961:19).

Goals opens the discourse on strategy into new avenues of thinking. Goals can be seen residing within many writings on organisation. For example, goals are implied in Heller's (et al, 1998) definition of organisation detailed earlier (see section - organisation theories relevant to the study) in the phrase "common purpose". For Ansoff (1984:31), goals as the "yardsticks by which present and future performance of the firm is measured". Goals used in this way underpins "hard systems" (Checkland, 1999) thinking in that they are an element that can be explained through rational analysis.

Silverman (1970:9) suggests the reason organisations use goals is that they "provide a referent by which to judge the 'health' of a system in comparison to others ... why one organisation is or is not attaining its goal may then be explained and organisational structures classified according to their degree of success". However, in the process of doing so, the organisational entity takes on objective features as though it is responsible for taking action. Such a position has been argued previously as doubtful (Silverman, 1970; Gioia and Sims, 1986). Simon (1964:1) supports this sentiment by explaining that "it is difficult to introduce the concept of organisational goal without reifying the organisation - treating it as something more than a system of interacting individuals".

Assuming organisation as a system of interacting individuals, Silverman (1970:6) conceptualises goals as "cultural objects", in the sense they are the things members use to make their actions accountable.

Scott (1987:268) takes up the notion of the symbolic nature of goals from the institutional theorists perspective:

"Whereas the cognitive and cathectic (emotional) properties of goals emphasise their effects on organisational participants, the symbolic aspects of goals points to their significance for organisational audiences. The goals an organisation espouses, the goals it appears to be servicing, the goals it embodies and is perceived to represent - these symbolic goals have important effects on the organisations ability to acquire legitimacy, allies, resources and personnel".

Support for Silverman's and Scott's view of strategy as a symbol can be found within the organisational communication discourse, noting the degrees of separation in their underlying assumptions. From the organisational communication perspective, strategy is simply conceived as "providing meanings that are used to interpret situations and adjust behaviour" (Huber and Daft, 1987:151). Viewing strategy in symbolic terms challenges the more linear, rational perspectives as argued following.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON STRATEGY

Morgan (1980:619) positions the symbolic interpretive view of strategy on the basis of its use as principally a sense making device:

"Whereas functionalist theory emphasises that organisations and their members may orient action and behaviour to the achievement of future states, interpretive theory emphasises that action is oriented as much to making sense of the past as to the future".

The premise implied by Morgan (1980) is that strategy is more a symbol of what an organisation 'is' rather than a vehicle for directing future courses of action. Mintzberg (1985:63) clarifies the difference in sentiments between these two views when he writes:

"If you 'think' about strategy, it is a 'position'. But if you 'experience' it, strategy is a 'perspective'. In other words, strategy making is not only a conceptual, but also a symbolic process, and strategies are bound up with images".

The premise of strategy as a symbol is embedded in the organisational communication discourse which views symbolism as the "substance of organisation"

(Tompkins, 1987; Berg, 1985). Substance is explained by Tompkins (1987:85) in the following way:

*"Any attempt to define substance must proceed by means of symbols, unmistakably 'not' the thing being defined; substance thus designates a thing in terms of what it is 'not' - that is, something intrinsic to a thing is outside or extrinsic to it, as suggested etymologically by **substance**, a foundation or a standing under".*

Seemingly paradoxical, strategy in Tompkins' (1987) symbolic view translates as being not what the organisation is, rather the foundation on which organisational life is created and reproduced. In other words, strategy is one substance which serves as a link between individuals of the system; the organisational symbolism.

Weick (1987:230) supports the premise of strategy as a link between the individual and the systems using the metaphor of map. In Weick's view, "any old explanation, map or plan is often sufficient because it stimulates focused, intense action that both creates meaning and stabilises an environment so that conventional analysis now becomes more relevant". Thus, strategy is symbolic in terms that it affects what people expect will be orderly, which Weick (1987:225) terms "presumptions of logic".

Presumptions of logic are taken to mean "forms of thought that lead people to act" (Weick, 1987:225). From this premise, Weick (1987:230) argues for an integration of the rational and emergent models (which he terms "linear" and "adaptive" respectively), for the reason that "execution is analysis and implementation is formulation". As a result, strategy is likened to "self fulfilling prophecy" (Merton, 1957; Whiteley, 1995) in that "strong beliefs that single out and intensify consistent action can bring events into existence" (Weick, 1987:227). Weick implies action creates the meanings; that it is not possible to plan the meanings. In other words, individuals treat a plan as though it has meaning however, "real meaning will come only when people respond to the plan and do something" (Weick, 1987:223). It is through this lens that the notion of customer focus is explored.

Silverman (1970:6) supports an action premise by questioning rational thinking on strategy and goals on two fronts:

- i) "unstated assumptions which exist 'out there', separately from the actors definition of the situation; and
- ii) explanation of actions by reference to a goal or rule without examining the social process whereby such symbols develop and gain legitimating significance, or in other words, the process whereby they are made accountable to members".

The processes whereby symbols develop and gain legitimate significance is explained by Huber and Daft (1987:151) in the following way:

"Over time and through communication among organisational members, symbols - including language and behaviour - evolve and take meaning. Symbols provide meaning that can be used to interpret situations and adjust behaviour".

Thus, interaction amongst individuals is based on a shared system of meanings. From this perspective, strategy as a symbol relates closely to thinking on organisations as "a dynamic web of human interaction" (Huber and Daft, 1987:151), which opposes thinking that implies rational processes and common purpose.

Berg (1985:295) supports the symbolic form of strategy in terms that it "becomes nothing but a conscious formulation of (a part of) the underlying corporate myth. Strategy is not seen as a plan but as a collective image that can be acted upon". Berg's (1985) view underpins thinking on organisation as "symbolic fields; holographic patterns of clustered symbolic representation which constitute the organisation reality" (Tompkins, 1987:84). Images are assumed to "consist of symbols, organised into patterns" (Berg, 1986:567). Accordingly, strategy represents the outcome from the patterning of meanings and their representations.

Broms and Gahmberg (1983:488) share this view by viewing strategic plans in terms of "mantras". They conceive strategy in the following way:

"Seldom a strategy that is agreed upon by top managers is followed up by adequate action. When the results are good, the credit goes to the plan, even if it may clearly be seen that the plan was never followed. We would say that the plan has been transformed from a practical plan into something else - into mythical thinking, into a mantra".

The notion of symbolic fields is revisited in discussing different ideas on the nature of organisational structure. In context of strategy, unlike rational thinking which views a plan as a tool for future action, the notion of symbolic fields reinforces Weick's (1969:102) view of a plan as "existing in a context of justification ... something that has been done before". From this position, strategy is but one pattern representing what an organisation 'is'.

Smircich (1983b:234) provides a meaningful summary linking Weick's enacted view of organisation environment with strategy as follows:

"The realisation that the environment is a social construction leads us to think differently about strategic planning. Instead of seeing strategic management as an analytic process, mediating between compelling and mutually influencing internal and external forces, strategic management becomes a creative process, the act of socially constructing an organisation reality".

Berg (1986:559) furthers the perspective in the sense that "the more cogent the symbolic field of the organisation, the easier for the corporate members to orient themselves and their behaviour in a desirable direction".

Campbell and Alexander (1997) support the symbolic view of strategy by asserting strategy formulation as involving three steps, defining purpose, discovering insights, and combining the two into a strategy. Defining purpose and discovering insights are metaphorically referred to as "the two islands of substance in the strategy swamp" (Campbell and Alexander, 1997:51). The schema is premised on rational thinking on strategy. However, the rational model is extended by asserting a reciprocal relationship between strategy development and implementation by way of gaining insights. Insights are taken to mean the "giving of meaning to tactics, which in turn make strategies doable and allow objectives to be set with a the knowledge that they can be achieved" (Campbell and Alexander, 1997:50). Arguably, such thinking conveys a cybernetic image for strategy.

Returning to the contextual element giving rise to the discussion on strategy, customer focus was introduced as a prescribed course of action by government to bring about enhanced service delivery and value for money service for the community. From the ideas presented in the functionalist perspective, the strategy of government can be conceived as an "imposed strategy" (Mintzberg, 1992a:15).

Customer focus is a direction from government, setting agencies on a predetermined course of action. In terms of a plan, strategy is "proactive, consciously formulated prior to decisions and actions" (Dent, 1990:5).

Although rational and logical, the traditional view of strategy may, at the operational level, be incomplete. For example, informed by institutional theory, the organisation structure may not necessarily support the work that actually goes on. Similarly, Mintzberg's (1992b) distinction between intended and realised strategies is on the basis that decisions and later day actions may not always align. Consequently, strategy as a plan can be taken to be nothing more than a reference to what has been accomplished in the past as distinct from what is to be achieved in the future. Weick (1969:102) embellishes this thinking in the sense of "planned actions existing in a context of justification more than in a context of anticipation".

Challenging the traditional perspective of strategy as a plan that guides future action (Ansoff, 1984) (anticipation in Weick's (1969) position), is Burgelman's (1983) idea of strategy as a theory of the firm. In Burgelman's (1983:66) view:

"The concept of corporate strategy represents the more or less explicit articulation of the firm's theory about its past concrete achievements. This theory defines the identity of the firm at any moment in time. It provides a basis for the maintenance of this identity and for the continuity in strategic activity".

Burgelman (1983:61) suggests that "corporate strategy 'induces' some strategic behaviour but changes in corporate strategy 'follow' other, autonomous, strategic behaviour". In other words, Burgelman assigns a reciprocal relationship between strategy and strategic behaviour in the sense that strategy both induces and follows strategic behaviour (and vice versa).

Burgelman's premise supports both Berg's (1985:295) symbolic view of strategy in the sense that it is a "collective image that can be acted upon", and Broms and Gahmberg's (1983) assertion that strategy is nothing more than an organisational mantra.

Given that the focus of interest for the study is in investigating organisational intentions and actions, the symbolic perspective of strategy provides a means for understanding the relationship between enacted strategy and strategy received in

practice. Under this light, strategy is taken to mean "the use of language as a symbolic means of inducing cooperating in beings that by nature respond to symbols" (Burke, 1969:43). In Mintzberg's (1992a:19) view, if organisation is defined as the "collective action in pursuit of common mission", then strategy as symbolic is concerned with "intentions diffusing through a group of people to become shared as norms and values, and patterns of behaviour becoming deeply ingrained in the group". The symbolic nature of strategy is aligned with assumptions underlying the premise-to-received practice schema as developed in Chapter one.

Having explained differences in thinking on strategy, arguments on the notion of technology are now presented.

Embedding 'technology' in the study context

At first glance, it seemed that theories pertaining to technology were not relevant to the study. However, this was based on the assumption that technology applied only to the physical objects or artifacts of organisations. A more abstract conceptualisation considers technology as "events transpiring inside a black box" (Rosenberg, 1982:vii). From this view, customer focus is not conceived as the output, rather the "black box" from which events transpire. In other words, customer focus refers to those phenomena which affect the transformation of resources from inputs into outputs.

Technology is often discussed in terms of resulting consequences on organisational functioning. Two differing views on the effects of technology on organisations are captured in the following quotation of Wall (et al, 1984:15).

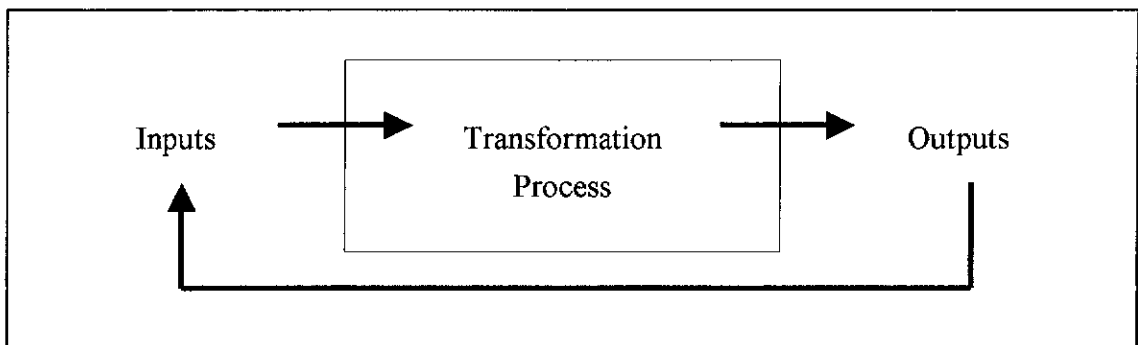
"For some, new technology provides the vehicle for an acceleration of the trend towards more simplified, de-skilled and less autonomous jobs ... For others, new technology offers the hope of better jobs with the individual allowed to exercise greater skill and control".

The former view implies technology exerts influence over individuals similar to thinking that assumes the environment exerts influence over organisation. The latter view implies that it is the way in which technology is used which determines the resulting consequences upon individuals. These two views are symbolic of the developments in thinking embedded in the technology literature, which are presented following.

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON TECHNOLOGY

The literature on technology is enormous and potentially confusing, given conceptual and measurement differences (Clarke and Clegg, 1998; Clegg, 1984; Slocum and Sims, 1980). Slocum and Sims (1980:194), in reviewing the works of Comstock and Scott (1977), Overton (et al, 1977), Ford and Slocum (1977), Glisson (1978), Stanfield (1976) and Van de Ven (1980), assert the dominant concern of the technology discourse has been with "techniques used to transform inputs into outputs on a predictable basis". From this perspective, technology assumes a deterministic feature in terms of how things are to be done and the resulting outcomes. This perspective relates to thinking about organisations as closed systems where technology is a system for transforming inputs into outputs. This is depicted in Figure 2.1.

FIGURE 2.1: Basic Technology Model of Organisation



Source: Hatch, 1997:130.

The modern use of the term technology underpins a view of organisation as a machine. At a basic level, machines and humans are viewed as basically 'comparable'. This type of thinking is illustrated in the writing of Jordan (1972:92).

"Given a complex man-machine system, identify the functions of the system and then, based on such a list ... choose machines for the functions they are best suited for and men for the functions they are best suited for".

At a more elaborate level, technology is defined "as the complex or combination of techniques used to alter materials or information in some specified or anticipated way to get a desired end result" (Davis and Taylor, 1972:11). Underlying both views is the belief that technology determines production.

In addition to its deterministic nature, a second feature of modernist technology thinking is its concern with the notion of control. In Porter's (1998:54) view, technology is the technology of management, "how you organise, how you control large production processes or logistical systems". Child (1984, p215) suggests that technology extends the possibilities for management control in three main respects:

- i) provides faster more comprehensive and more accurate knowledge of operations;
- ii) reduces the scope for idiosyncratic judgment and mystique in the work of employees; and
- iii) permits the unification of previously segmented control systems and thereby increases the potential for a comprehensive and balanced assessment of performance.

As such, technology extends managerial control by providing greater access to information on organisational performance. Penn (1982:108) puts this perspective descriptively as follows:

"Technology does not simply mean machinery around which there is a given logic of working or paratechnical relations. Technology is dependent upon the conflict between agents of capital and representations of sections of the workers".

Arguably, Penn's (1982) view of control is dependent upon how information is to be used. For example, Oldham and Hackman (1980) in reviewing the financial control literatures note that if technology is used to bring to the attention of workers information that reflects only sub optimal performance, worker frustration and stress may increase. Alternatively, Kling and Iacono's (1984) study on models of computing and social control lead them to assert that in environments where management control is extended by new technology, employee satisfaction and motivation may be heightened when the technology is coupled with restructuring of work, the training of workers, and the surveillance of peers in a social network.

A study of Buchanan and Boddy (1983), examining the effects of new technology on job characteristics and job attitudes of biscuit-making operators, support both premises. Their research focused on the jobs of doughmen and ovenmen in the biscuit manufacturing process.

Results obtained on the efficiency of new technology in regards to doughmen duties showed that output was increased with a reduced number of bad mixes. However, both doughmen and management responded that the technology had negative consequences. This is illustrated in the following responses, as quoted from Buchanan and Boddy's (1983:114) study.

"This job has got much more boring and routine ... It affects our ability to get foreman and managers from the operators ... Now they (doughmen) seem to lose all interest ... Operators don't appreciate as fully as before the consequences of what they do".

The findings support a deterministic view of technology in the sense of increased job fractionalisation and simplification.

Results obtained on the effects of new technology on ovensmen duties showed a different trend. The new technology was seen as having enhanced ovensmen jobs, with feedback mechanisms making operators more aware of passing problems down the line. Buchanan and Boddy (1983:115) studies showed that:

"The new package [technology] has increased the interest and challenge in the job because it gave him a goal he could influence, while supervisors commented ... he felt that he had the satisfaction of knowing that he was cutting waste and costs".

The results suggest that for ovensmen, elements other than the technology itself effect the transformation of inputs into outputs. Jones (1982:179-182) supports this notion by suggesting that "there are grounds for rejecting a unilateral motivation and capacity to de-skill on the part of the capitalist management ... the extent to which simplification occurs will vary in accordance with differences in, and interrelationships between, trade union positions, product markets and pre-existing systems of management control".

The premise of Jones implies an open systems thinking approach to organisations as described earlier. The view of organisations as dependent upon the environment to facilitate the transformation of inputs into outputs in order to survive is maintained. As such, technology is viewed as influenced by forces external to itself.

Emerging from the technology discourse are similarities in ideas as expressed in functionalist thinking on organisation environment. On the one hand, technology is viewed as a closed system which is the sole concern of management. "The utilitarian tradition assumes rational, self interested behaviour affected minimally by social relations" (Granovetter, 1985:481). On the other hand, "de-skilling arising from technology involves not technical change *per se* but social changes, whereby management gains control over the manning of machinery" (Penn, 1982:108). Both views underpin modernist thinking in organisation theory in the sense "managers use technical change to improve management control over work and work flow" (Buchanan and Boddy, 1983:110).

Countering the deterministic views on technology are ideas that emphasise choice in the use of technology. From this perspective, the premise of a technology of production is replaced with an interest in the production of technology. It is this perspective which provides a platform for emerging arguments which challenge functionalist thinking on technology.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON TECHNOLOGY

Trist and Bamforth's (1951) studies show the effects of technology on work group cohesion and autonomy in the British coal mining industry. They challenge traditional thinking about the social impacts of technology. Socio-technical theory provides a framework for considering the development of technology within the context of the social system (Emery, 1993). Rather than adopting a deterministic view of technology on the social system, socio-technical assumptions assumes both the social and technological systems as reciprocally constituting each other. That is, technology is part of a social construction. From this perspective, "cultural norms, social relations, and power on knowledge about designs and production practices, are seen as *socially shaping* products and their technologies" (Hatch, 1997:152). From this premise, interest is on understanding the influence of the social factors in which technology is constructed, rather than developed as applications of rational scientific findings.

Clegg (1984:136) supports this notion by suggesting that "technology is a manifestation of the strategic choices made in its selection". As a result, technology choices are governed by managerial value systems. Emerging from the literature (Clarke and Clegg, 1998; Clegg, 1984) are two dominant values that govern choices

used by management in the design and selection of particular technologies. These are:

- i) an economic value in terms of ease of training and replacing staff and the reduction of direct labour costs resulting from de-skilling; and
- ii) a psychological value is the belief that individuals need close external control to shape their behaviour at work.

The economic value bears resemblance to Taylor's (1947) principles of scientific management. The psychological value underpins McGregor's (1960) characterisation of Theory X in that workers are viewed as basically lazy, irresponsible, and motivated solely by monetary interests. From this perspective, technology is viewed not as a passive element responding to environmental forces. Rather, the type of technology selected is dependent upon the choice decisions of managers. These decisions are not rational; rather they are influenced by the values informing the decision-making process. Plausibly, the modern view of technology as a means of achieving productivity improvements, needs to be considered within a broader context of values which inform the decisions made by managers.

In this regard, the technology discourse can be located within the strategy discourse as discussed in the previous section. Viewing strategy making "as a linear, sequential, orderly activity initiated by a powerful few is premised on the mechanistic metaphor of organisations" (Dent, 1990:8). This relates to the sequential transformation model of technology as depicted in Figure 2.1.

Contrasting with the linear, sequential model is an emergent view of strategy. From this perspective, strategic choice is bound by assumptions that managers hold in their minds. Emergent in this context means the processes interacting at the point of technology and not the resulting emergent services or outputs that flow from the technology. In other words, the "pattern in action that explains the pursuit" (Mintzberg, 1992b:5).

Applying a constructivist view to the premise of Glegg's (1984) above regarding managerial dominant values, if technology is viewed as a manifestation of managers' strategic choices used in its selection, then perceptions of negative consequences are plausibly a result of managerial values rather than the technology itself. In other words, managers construe workers as basically lazy and irresponsible (McGregor,

1960) and then adopt a type of technology as if the view of workers they created was forcing them to do so.

Returning to the contextual element giving rise to the discussion of technology, it was suggested that customer focus could be conceived as a type of technology. Adopting the view of technology as bounded by choices that precede and shape it, and then to understand customer focus requires consideration of the social factors which give rise to the production.

The functionalist approach to technology conceptualises technology as a sub system within a broader organisation system. Such thinking bears allegiance to General Systems theory of organisation. Although General Systems theory implies an openness of every system, Katz and Kahn (1966:8) suggest:

"it is easier in practice to take account of stable relationships than dynamic interactions of input, throughput and output, and many approaches labeled systemic are in fact closed and static".

From this perspective, customer focus can be conceived as one further system of control at the disposal of managers. The view of technology as a sub system within a broader organisation system leads to the fractionalisation and simplification of jobs. Productivity efforts guide thinking in the direction of a technology of production based on a premise of "technology determinism" (Gouldner, 1961:76). That is, technology determines the degree of upgrading or downgrading of workers' skills.

Contrasting reductionist thinking is the notion of technology as socially construed from the reciprocal relationship between the social and technical elements of a system. Although social and technical systems are elements found within modernist thinking, the challenge is premised on the basis that technology is shaped through prevailing cultural and social relation influences acting within and upon the entity.

In technological terms, customer focus is embedded within the choice decisions individuals make concerning socially accepted correct patterns of behaviour. This links thinking about customer focus as technology with strategy. Technology of production thinking is replaced with a production of technology orientation. In other words, it is the assumptions and values guiding individuals action that influence the types of technologies produced and not vice versa. As such, customer focus is not viewed as a 'reality' independent of the observer; rather it becomes 'real' through acts

of attention and the attribution of meanings to it by the social group members. Processes of meaning attribution assumes interaction and negotiation amongst individuals, which provides the platform for entering into the fourth core concept which organisation theorists rely on in constructing their theories, namely social structure.

Embedding 'social structure' in the study context

Structure may be simply conceptualised in terms of a "relatedness of parts" (Katz and Kahn, 1966:24). Consequentially, social structure refers to the relationship between social organisational elements, while physical structure refers to the relationship between physical organisational elements. It is the issue of relationships between social elements which is relevant to the study.

Social structure is an important notion for the study as it is a key contextual element grounding data collection. Organisations studied are all medium to large sized government agencies with 40 or more employees. Although each a distinct social unit, all are subject to directions imposed by a central agency, the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO). Within the study, what organisations say they do is assumed as embedded in the thinking of agencies' Top Management Teams responsible for implementation of customer focus. What organisations are perceived to do is assumed as embedded in the thinking of agency workers responsible for customer focus implementation. As such, literature on social structure can be conceived as further ingredients on which to articulate assumptions underlying the premise-to-received practice relationship.

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE THINKING

Discourse on developments in social structure thinking since the 1900's has been dominated by managerial concern for maintaining control and stability within organisations. As such, developments in social structure thinking are premised on a deterministic view which "emphasises the lawful regularities that inhere things and set limits on human will" (Wilson, 1992:25).

The concern by managers for control has manifested itself in different organisational forms. Barley and Kunda (1992:363) characterise control in terms of managerial rhetoric which "has elaborated in waves which alter between ideologies of normative and rational control". Thus, theories on Industrial Betterment (normative) during the

late eighteenth hundreds, Taylor's Scientific Management (rational) at the turn of the century, Human Relations (normative) during the 1920's, Systems Rationalism (rational) during the mid 1950's and Organisation Culture (normative) from the 1980's are related on the premise that they share a common managerial concern for control. As such, each assertion is premised on a worldview where managers are assumed as rational agents whose primary role is in maintaining control and order.

Rather than the term 'order', Burrell and Morgan (1979:17) adopt a broader view by suggesting the notion, "sociology of regulation". Burrell and Morgan's view of regulation is concerned with explanations which emphasise society's unity and cohesiveness. Thus, while Barley and Kunda explain waves of rhetoric as they pertain to managerial concern for control, Burrell and Morgan (1979:17) argue a broader interpretation in that managerial concern for control is premised on "the need for regulation in human affairs". Thus, Burrell and Morgan's view helps to thicken previous explanations for the concept of paradigm in that differences in perspectives on modes of control (normative versus rational) can alternatively be conceived as differences in perspectives within the one worldview. In this case, a worldview premised on a regulatory nature of society. Thus, in interpreting developments in social structure thinking, it is useful to launch the argument within a regulatory frame of reference.

Although origins on social thinking can be seen to reside with Owen (1813) and Montgomery's (1832) normative ethos of Industrial Betterment, a popular source of inspiration is Weber's (1947) rational theory of bureaucracy. Hatch (1997:164) characterises Weber's view of organisation as social structures in terms of three central principles:

- hierarchy of authority;
- division of labour; and
- formal rules and procedures.

Hatch's assertion is supported by Hales (1993:88) who characterises Weber's three central principles for bureaucracy in terms of:

- hierarchy;
- specialisation; and
- impersonal rationality.

Both Hatch's and Hales' characterisation of Weber's notion of bureaucracy pertain to the same social phenomena - hierarchy. For Hales (1993:88), hierarchy refers to a "graded, vertical system of managerial-subordinate relationships, with each position having a defined area of responsibility and power in the form of access to organisational resources and reporting to the one above it". In others words, hierarchy represents an authority system, paralleling Hatch's (1997:174) assertion of a "hierarchy of authority".

Specialisation or division of labour relates to both work and people. "Work is divided into detailed, interdependent functional areas and allocated to those with particular specialist skills and knowledge.... People are specialised in that recruitment and selection are on the basis of specialist expertise or potential to fulfill a particular work role" (Hales, 1993:88).

Formal rules and procedures refers to mechanisms of coordination. In Hatch's (1997:166) view, although "hierarchy of authority makes a substantial contribution, hierarchy is not enough to integrate the many activities defined by the division of labour, especially as the organisation grows in size and complexity, or copes with high levels of uncertainty or interdependence". As such, rules and procedures are one of a number of mechanisms which "fill the gaps between coordination provided by hierarchy and that which is demanded by the division of labour" (Hatch, 1997:166).

Hales (1993:89) characterises Hatch's notion of coordination mechanisms in terms of "impersonal rationality". Hales (1993:89) asserts that "the extent to which hierarchy represents an authority system, rather than simply a distribution of power, flows from the principle of impersonal rationality". In other words, "decisions, actions and relationships are seen as means to particular ends, governed by consideration of what is both necessary and sufficient for the effective achievement of these ends, and therefore immune from personal considerations" (Hales, 1993:89). Hales (1993:89) furthers his argument by asserting that "impersonal rationality assumes three other principles which pervade bureaucratic organisations, namely:

- regulation - which means that behaviour is subject to detailed, comprehensive rules;
- standardisation - which describes the nature and purpose of rules, namely to impose conformity, regularity and predictability on relationships and work behaviour through a process of categorisation; and

- formalisation - which describes the form of rules, which in the case of bureaucracy are usually reified and prescriptive".

Ranson (et al, 1980:2) term this the "prescribed framework; the differentiation of positions, formulation of rules and procedures, and prescriptions of authority". As such, Weber's (1947) notion of bureaucracy is similar to Taylor's (1947) principles of Scientific Management to the extent that both view organisations "as authority structures in which span of control and work specialisation are dominant features" (Euske and Roberts, 1987:41).

The differences between the two approaches can be explained at a focus of interest level. "Whereas Taylor focused on scientific management, Weber focused on authority structures" (Euske and Roberts, 1987:43). In other words, whereas Taylor's (1947) interest was in prescribing a one best way of rational control based on the scientific design of work, Weber's (1947) interest was in how organisational rationality is achieved, based on rules and procedures enforced through formal control systems, that is, impersonal rationality.

Kieser (1987:103) interprets Weber as underpinning a rational bias when he suggests "modern bureaucracies force individuals into a basic dilemma, the bureaucracy become 'iron cages' which impair their members' ability to conduct a rational, reflective and self determined life". Masuch (1985) terms this phenomenon "vicious circles". Vicious circles are conceived as "action loops with counter productive results" (Masuch, 1985:15). Masuch defines an action loop in the following way:

"A loop occurs when an activity entails a chain of other activities which, in turn, ultimately re-create the original situation. With the re-creation of the original situation, the loop can repeat itself, and a network of activities can emerge that can develop and maintain its own identity in a given environment".

"Iron cages" (Kieser, 1987) and "vicious circles" (Masuch, 1985) can, therefore, be likened to 'self fulfilling prophecy', which aligns with Weick's (1987:225) notion of "presumptions of logic" (see under section - symbolic interpretivist thinking on strategy). The theme welding 'iron cage' and 'vicious circle' thinking is the use of rational explanation in understanding irrational action. Arguably, the rational discourse is but one side of the 'action' coin. Rational arguments tend to silence the voices of those who experience the action phenomena (Workers). Consequently,

only partial worldviews are used in explaining the observed phenomena of interest. The partial worldview is taken to be that of managers. If, as implied in Weick's (1969) assertion that to create a structure actions have to be repeated, more meaningful explanations for the notions of 'iron cages', 'vicious circles' and 'self fulfilling prophecy' are gained by understanding the meanings reciprocally assigned by individuals experiencing the phenomenon.

The idea of rational explanation in understanding irrational action underpins what Wilson (1992:51) terms "organisational irrationality". In reference to works by Cyert and March (1963) and March and Simon (1958), Wilson (1992:51) suggests:

"The emergence of irrationality (anti-positivism) into organisational theory (and with it recognition of the innate impracticability of designing planned change programs) took place some 30 years ago, when a number of authors pointed out that not only were individuals incapable of acting wholly rational, but also organisations themselves were institutionally capable of acting irrationally".

The point of interest with Wilson's (1992) assertion is the apparent paradox between a prescribed social structure framework built on a premise of rationality, yet with acknowledgment of organisation's inability to act wholly rationally. In other words, the paradox between rational prescribed frameworks and irrational interaction directs attention in seeking alternate ways for viewing social structure relationships.

Returning to the earlier discussion on theories of organisation, Weber's (1947) notion of bureaucracy is closely related to Taylor's (1947) mechanistic view of organisation. Bureaucratic thinking is coined in terms of 'closely related to' and not 'the same as' mechanistic thinking. The reasons for the distinction call to bear a fourth dimension of organisation structure, namely "centralisation" (Simon, *et al*, 1954). Although not explicitly referred to in either Hatch's or Hales' interpretation of Weber's principles of bureaucracy, the concept of centralisation attracts a great deal of attention in the literature.

Centralisation is concerned with the level at which decision making is located. "An organisation is considered centralised to the degree that authority is not delegated but concentrated at higher levels of management" (Jablin, 1987:406). Simon (*et al*, 1954:13) explains the notion by contrasting it with decentralised organisational forms.

"An administrative organisation is centralised to the extent that decisions are made at relatively high levels of organisation and people at low levels have relatively little discretion; and decentralised to the extent that important delegations of discretionary and decision making authority are made from higher to lower levels of the organisation".

Under this light, structure takes on deterministic features, similar to ideas discussed previously that assume the environment to exert power over organisation. This deterministic feature of organisation structure is further exemplified in studies characterising different organisational forms.

Hatch (1997:70) distinguishes organisational forms on the basis of three variables: complexity; formalisation; and centralisation. Complexity picks up on Weber's principle of division of labour/ specialisation while formalisation picks up on the formal rules and procedures/ impersonal rationality principle. Hatch (1997:170) cites these three variables as "constantly appearing in contingency arguments on which social structure is measured". This is depicted in Table 2.2. For comparative purposes, also included in Table 2.2 are the relationships of these elements to organic structures.

TABLE 2.2: A comparison of Mechanistic, Organic and Bureaucratic Organisations.

	Complexity	Formalisation	Centralisation
Mechanistic	high	high	high
Bureaucratic	high	high	low
Organic	low	low	low

Source: Hatch, 1997:170.

As indicated in Table 2.2, the three dimensions of social relationships provide a means for distinguishing the three organisational forms. Specifically:

- i) relationships between people, positions and organisational units are used as a measure for defining types of social structure; and
- ii) dimensions of these relationships in terms of complexity, formalisation and centralisation offer a means for distinguishing between the types of organisational forms.

The notion of 'measure' itself reinforces a view of objectivity to social structure. This is exemplified in Checkland and Holwell's (1998:46) writings on social relations in terms of "organisational behaviour as decision making/problem solving in pursuit of goals". As such, functionalist thinking on social structure is seen as underpinning the positivist mindset.

Positivism was explained earlier as a type of mental model in which the social world is assumed to exist independently of the individual's awareness of it. Silverman (1970:87) thickens the description by asserting positivism to be "associated with explanation of human behaviour as a direct reaction to an external stimulus; for instance, a non-social factor such as a certain technical system may be thought to produce, by itself, a given pattern of behaviour".

The view of human behaviour as a direct reaction to an external stimulus is supported in the normative social structure discourse whereby particular organisational structures are contingent upon the nature of the environment in which they are located. For example, based on the works of Burns and Stalker (1961) and Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Wilson (1992:33) describes how contingency theorists view of structural relationships leads to the assertions that "mechanistic forms of organisation are linked with placid, predictable environments and organic forms with turbulent, unpredictable environments".

Based on similar underlying assumptions, Miles and Snow (1994) argue that successful organisations achieve strategic fit with their environments by supporting strategies with appropriately designed structures and management processes.

"Tight fit squeezes out uncertainty and confusion, and it gives complex processes the fell of simplicity. Organisational failure results from a lack of external and/or internal fit" (Miles and Snow, 1994:18).

Such notions support the previous argument on organisation environment relations, where functionalist thinking views the environment as a powerful influence over organisations. Specifically, those assumptions which underlie thinking in the population ecology and institutional theory perspectives.

Based on a similar premise but on the opposite side of the 'organisation environment fit' coin is the issue of choice over the type of environment in which organisations

act. Huber and Daft (1987:137) argue that organisations choose the environments in which they operate and therefore, shape the environmental characteristics that they face.

"A firm that explicitly chooses to compete on the basis of being first with new products or services in newly created markets, will tend to encounter high levels of environmental complexity, turbulence and information load than will a firm that chooses to compete on the basis of delivering high quality, low cost goods and services to old, well known customers".

As illustrated by Huber and Daft (1987), choices made by individuals are based on precepts concerning the environment as if it was 'real'. In other words, assumptions concerning the nature of the environment are viewed as directing the types of decisions made. In Huber and Daft's view, a consequence of decision makers to compete in the open market is perceived environmental uncertainty. This perceived environmental uncertainty is "the uncertainty that the organisation's members perceive as characterising the external environment" (Huber and Daft, 1987:137).

Wilson (1992:35) coins perceived environmental uncertainty as a "subjective fact". From this perspective, "the environment is viewed as a tangible set of external factors but is dependent in its definition upon the variety of subjective interpretations of individuals" (Wilson, 1992:35). Although subjective in its orientation, the environment is assumed as a tangible set of factors open to description and definition as though it was an objective fact. As discussed earlier, the challenge to this mode of thinking is Weick's enacted view of the environment. In brief, the enacted view of environment sees the "human actor creating the environment to which the system then adapts" (Weick, 1969:64).

In sum, functionalist thinking on organisation structure can be characterised as focusing on features "that exist independent of the processes that create and transform them " (Putnam, 1983b:36). This perspective is referred to by Jablin (1987:390) as the "positional" view of organisation. The positional view underpins an objectivist premise of 'reality'; whereby structure is an empirical object, existing independently from those who are a part of it. Such thinking resides in contemporary literature, for example Clarke and Clegg (1998:35) who argue that "structures are no longer givens, they are variables to be managed by strategic choices made by senior executive management".

The positional view of organisation is coined by Ranson (et al, 1980:1) as the "prescribed organisational framework". Accordingly, the 'formal features', 'positional view' and 'prescribed organisational framework' all pertain to the same phenomenon, namely the formal configuration of roles and procedures of organisational structure. Adopting Ranson's (et al, 1980:1) assertion that "the concept of structure is usually understood to imply a configuration of activities that is characteristically enduring and persistent ... its patterned regularity", the focus on formal configuration of roles and procedures is but one aspect of an organisation's regularity.

A pattern emerging from the formal configuration of roles and procedures perspective is the impression that social structure "take on static or immutable qualities in that their characteristics rarely change, at least not through their own volition". (Putnam, 1983b:34). Weber's (1947) model of bureaucracy is illustrative of this type of thinking.

Open systems thinking suggests organisation social structures need to adapt to influences exerted from the environment through processes of interaction (Checkland, 1998). Although open system thinking implies a patterned regularity, attention is still focused on maintaining organisational equilibrium. As such, an organismic view of organisation underpins a premise of control characteristic of Classical Theory thinking. Burrell and Morgan (1979:220) support this notion and put the analysis in the following way:

"Insofar as they as they (socio-technical theorists) adopt organismic models which presume a functional unity of systems parts, with certain imperative functions which must be satisfied if the organisation is to survive, their analysis is constrained by the requirements characteristic of a managerial point of view".

Giddens (1984:16) makes the argument in a more forceful way:

"But there can be no doubt how 'structure' is usually understood by functionalists, and, indeed, by the vast majority of social analysts - as some kind of 'patterning' of social relations or social phenomena. This is often naively conceived of in terms of visual imagery, akin to skeleton or morphology of an organism or to the girders of a building ... Structure

here appears as 'external' to human action, as a source of constraint on the free initiative of the independently constituted subject".

The challenge to functionalist thinking comes from understanding the assumptions underlying the managerial point of view perspective, which Hales (1993:76) terms "hegemonic regimes". Managerial hegemony can be viewed in terms of Marx's (1978) false consciousness or Deetz and Kersten's (1983) false consensus. Deetz and Kersten (1983:161) explain the notion of false consensus using the hermeneutic premise on the nature of human expression and meaning as directional and one-sided:

"While organisational structure is a construction, the manner of construction is anything but arbitrary. Creation of surface meaning occurs under conditions that allow for some interpretations and disallow others. Furthermore, once created, a particular meaning system maintains and legitimises the conditions that established it. In effect, social practices become institutionalised and confront organisational members as if they are natural rather than historical constructions".

Orum (1988:395) puts the premise of hegemony in the following way: "Ideas and their production through the institution of society play a crucial role in the Marxian imagery, but principally as illusions that help to maintain the dominance of the ruling class *"the ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas"* (Marx, 1978:172) ... These ideas, work to sustain hegemony of the dominant class, or classes, by disguising the true nature of exploitation, particularly under capitalism".

Based on the thinking implied in Weick's (1969) enactment theory, managerial hegemony exists only through individuals' willingness to recognise the power influence of management. Managerial hegemony is not world taken-for-granted, existing independently outside of individuals' awareness of it. Rather, individuals themselves construct the power influence (exploitation in Marx's view) of managers, which is made 'real' by acting in ways which support managerial dominance over them.

In short, false consciousness gives rise to managerial hegemony through individuals' perceptions of themselves within a social structure that they themselves create and reproduce. From this perspective, social structure is recast in terms of relationships which emerge in and through human interaction. Poole and McPhee (1983:210) hold

this view when they assert, "structures are intersubjective, but they are not shared equally by all members of the organisation". Put in another way, "social relationships are not static as in the bureaucratic view - the prescribed framework, rather dynamic in that they depend upon the reproduction of interaction patterns that constitute them - the interaction framework" (Ranson, et al, 1980:2).

A dominant feature emerging from functionalist thinking on social structure is the assumed stability of "interdependencies amongst organisational roles" (Conrad, 1983:179). "Structure remains static and shapes the activities of its members" (Putnam, 1983b:36) because of a dominant focus of interest in explaining organisations prescribed framework. This includes some of the more dynamic views on social structure, including:

- Greiner's (1972) life cycle theory which posits five phases of organisational development, each characterised by both an evolution and revolution; and
- Katz and Kahn's (1966) three stage open system model of organisational development characterised as: i) a primitive collective based on people's common needs and expectations; ii) an insurance of stability of structure; and iii) an elaboration of structure.

Both perspectives are related in the sense that they construe structure through a "rational and purposive" (Fineman and Mangham, 1971:331) lens. For example, Greiner (1972:38) writes about organisational development using the term "is determined by", and Katz and Kahn (1966:75) using the terms "adaptive mechanisms" and "survival". Perceptions of change under such light are biased from a managerial point of view.

On the same theme but from a different perspective is the view of organisations as 'rational and purposive' in the sense of surfacing underlying power relationships. Deetz and Kersten (1983:160) adopt a broader environmental perspective by suggesting:

"Organisational practice occurs under conditions of material inequality that result in domination. Structuring social reality in accordance with these conditions serves the purpose of maintaining, disguising, and legitimising these inequities".

Deetz and Kersten's (1983) view differs from traditional dynamic models of social structure in that organisation is conceptualised as "powerful instruments of domination to be understood as an integral part of a wider process of domination within society as a whole" (Morgan, 1980:618). Domination is made meaningful in context of the patterns of regularities of "lived experience" (Schwandt 1994:118; Smith, 1983:7) from the point of view of those who live it. Deetz and Kersten's thinking, with its emphasis on seeking understanding, challenges the functionalist frame for order and cohesiveness.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Symbolic interpretivists express their views on social structure by questioning the notion of 'organisational stability'. Two views questioning the notion of organisational stability are:

- Giddens' (1984:16) notion of "duality of structural conditions" which underlie the taken-for-granted assumptions of stability; and
- Berg's (1985:285) notion of "symbolic fields", not in terms of 'reality', but the collective symbolisation of that 'reality'.

Both Giddens and Berg shift the focus of attention on social structure from a prescribed framework perspective to one of "patterned regularities and processes of interaction" (Ranson, *et al.*, 1980:2). From the interaction perspective, "the seeming stability of the social structure is undermined by a view of the numerous interactions that shape and transform social structure on a continuous basis" (Hatch, 1997:173).

Dynamic models of social structure from the everyday interaction view assert that the "prescribed framework stands in a rather superficial relationship to the day-to-day work of organisation, and that only by examining the patterned regularities of interaction, the informal structure or the substructure of what people actually do, can we arrive at a more fundamental understanding of organisational structure" (Ranson, *et al.*, 1980:2). Interest is on explaining changes in relationships as they emerge day-to-day rather than the "concrete" (Putnam, 1983b:45), prescribed framework point of view. Yet as Ranson (*et al.*, 1980:3) point out, dynamic perspectives still "acknowledge stability", however this is viewed in terms of "a dynamic condition whose seeming stability is the result of the unexamined assumptions that it is stable" (Hatch, 1979:181).

The everyday interaction view of social structure is articulated by Giddens (1984) in his theory on "structuration". Giddens (1984:377) conceives structures in terms of the "rules and resources, recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems". In other words, interaction produces the structures that are observed. From the structuration premise, social structures may appear as though they are static, however "it is as configurations of interaction patterns that are produced by actors who orient their actions around such ideas" (Scott, 1995:21).

Lewis and Seibold (1993:326) explain structuration in practice in the following way:

"When organisational members actively use some rule or resource that designers or implementers have incorporated into an innovation (for example a change in reporting relationships), they are employing the changed rules and new resources in order to act, but they are simultaneously recreating the rules and resources through how they interpret and work out (even modify) the structures. The structures are not only produced in the particular form that the users create, but they are reproduced as rules and resources to be invoked for future use".

Structuration can thus be conceptualised as the creation and recreation of social systems through the everyday application of rules and resources. As Riley (1983:415) points out: "social systems are regularised relations in interaction - they have no reality independent of the social practices they constitute". McPhee (1985:164) coins the argument as bearing a "dual relation to structure - it both produces and reproduces structure and the related social system".

The structuration perspective therefore provides a premise for furthering the static feature of structure from the functionalist perspective. While structure is associated with 'constraint' in the sense of organisational stability, this is only one part of the interaction ("duality" in Giddens, 1984:25 terms) phenomenon. Structure is also 'constraining' in the sense that people interpret actions in terms of those structures. In other words, social structure can be viewed as emerging from the interaction of individuals, which over time become stabilised into an observable pattern of interaction. Giddens (1984:25) describes this duality as follows:

"The constitution of agents and structures are not two independently given sets of phenomena, a dualism, but represent a duality. According to the

notion of the duality of structure, the structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcomes of the practices they recursively organise".

Interaction in Giddens' (1984) sense of "duality" provides a richer explanation for the apparent static patterns of behaviour that resonate throughout traditional writings, including Weber's (1947) notion of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy maintains order and control in the sense that it constrains action. The challenge to the perspective rests with the notion that the constraining elements of the prescribed framework (bureaucracy) are in fact created through patterns of interaction amongst individuals who sustain the organisation structure.

Based on the above, social structure is seen as both constraining individual action, yet at the same time, the structures constraining action are created by the action that is constrained. This premise is supported by Ranson (et al, 1980:3) who suggests that "organisational structure describes both the prescribed frameworks and realised configurations of (everyday) interaction, and the degrees to which they are mutually constituted and constituting". Conrad (1983:184) furthers the thinking by asserting "people's actions simultaneously create, sustain, and revise interpretive structures; these structures in turn guide and constrain actions".

Ranson (et al, 1980:4) explains the way in which the process of structuring itself defines and mediates organisational structures by way of three abstract and interdependent conceptual categories.

- "Organisational members create *provinces of meaning* which incorporate interpretive schemes, intermittently articulated as values and interests, that form the basis of their orientation and strategic purpose.
- Since interpretive schemes can be the basis of cleavage as much as of consensus, it is often appropriate to consider an organisation as composed of alternative interpretive schemes, value preferences and social interests, the resolution of which is determined by *dependencies of power* and domination.
- Such constitutive structuring by organisational members has, in turn, always to accommodate *contextual constraints* inherent in characteristics of the organisation and the environment, with organisational members differentially responding to and enacting their contextual conditions according to the opportunities provided by infrastructure and time".

Ranson's (et al, 1980) process view of structuring holds high currency with other ideas articulated within the symbolic interpretive perspectives presented thus far. For example, the notion of "organisational members responding and enacting their contextual environments" is premised on Weick's (1969) enactment view of organising. In addition, the notion of "provinces of meaning" implies a symbolic interpretive orientation in explaining social phenomena. Linking the thinking argued within the symbolic interpretivist perspectives is a processual conceptualisation for organisation. While perspectives aligning with functionalist thinking focus on objective features of organisation, these features tend to adopt a world taken-for-granted form of their own. Weick's (1969) use of the term organising is provocative in the sense he challenges the taken-for-granted way people tend to think about organisations.

Aligning with Ranson's and with Weick's processual view of organisations is Berg's (1985:283) notion of "symbolic fields" as presented during the argument on strategy. The symbolic perspective views every aspect of organisational reality through a system of symbols. From this position, social structure is the "collective meanings or structures existing in the mind of organisations' members" (Tompkins, 1987:84). In context with strategy, a plan is not the outcome to rational action, rather a collective image to be acted upon. From the symbolic interpretive perspective, symbolism means "creating organisational realities and environments, as well as the motives of those who act" (Tompkins, 1987:83). The theme connecting the ideas is a focus of interest on organisational members' understanding as opposed to an interest on external factors. Bartunek (1984:355) explains the position as follows:

"Recently, it has been argued that size, technology, and environment do not have a direct effect on structure. Rather, these features affect structure through the mediation of powerful organisation members who perceive and enact them in various way and then translate them into structure decisions".

In sum, the dynamic model and enacted view of social structure are related on the premise that structure is a phenomenon understandable only in terms of the meanings individuals attribute to it. Such views challenge the assumption of structure as "external to human action, as a source of constraint on the free initiative of the independently constituted subject" (Giddens, 1984:16). However, while the dynamic model can be conceptualised as the opposing pole of the structure continuum, the

enactment view denies the existence of any such continuum, as structure is a product of ongoing interactions within a specific context.

Although differences are identified between ideas challenging functionalist thinking on social structure, their strength lies in presenting new opportunities for understanding change phenomena. For example, Smircich (1983b:240) asserts that "organisational change occurs by altering organisational epistemology, the systems of knowledge that make up the basis for organised action". In a similar way, Berg (1985:289) asserts "change in the symbolic field means changes in two dimensions of experience: changes in the symbolic representation (the sagas, legends and so on); and changes in the root metaphor or the dominant myth of the company".

Returning to the contextual element giving rise to the discussion on social structure, one way of describing the context for the study is by defining participating organisations as bureaucracies. Using Weber's (1947) "ideal" model, characteristics of participating organisations can be measured and related to assumptions of 'what ought to be'. Further, differentiation can be made based on the physical dimensions of the organisations in terms of complexity, formalisation and centralisation. A linear plan could then be detailed explaining the relationship for the premise-to-received practice elements in adapting a customer focus orientation in the delivery of services and products.

Alternatively, the symbolic interpretive perspective argues that the prescribed framework is but one element of the social structure phenomenon. More important are the temporal, day-to-day interactions that help sustain the stable, taken-for-granted characteristics of structure. The symbolic interpretivist social structure story develops along the following lines. At its simplest, there is an interdependence between formal organisation structure and emergent structure (Tompkins, 1987). Emphasising interdependence leads to a conceptualisation of structures as the "complex medium of control which is continually produced and recreated in interaction and yet shapes the interaction" (Ranson, *et al*, 1980:3). Put simply, "structure is an outgrowth of sets of relationships that have 'real' consequences on everyday interaction" (Putnam, 1983b:35). Weick (1969:43) completes the story by equating the term 'organisation structure' with the notion of 'interlocked behaviours':

"Structure determines what an organisation does and how it appears is the same structure that is established by regular patterns of interlocked behaviours".

In other words, organisation structures are both constituted and constitutive.

Rather than describing elements of participating agencies' prescribed frameworks, the focus of interest for this study is the relationship between what agencies say they do and what they are perceived to do. Although customer focus can be conceptualised as a technology - a type of black box into which resources flow and outputs emerge, it is the processes of customer focus in the sense of an enduring pattern of behaviour that is of interest. While the prescribed framework of organisation enables differentiation between the discerning features of organisation, understanding of the pattern of behaviour elicits insights into customer focus in practice. Understanding of the patterning behaviour, based on Giddens' (1984) notion of structuration, provides the basis for interpreting the premise-to-received practice relationship.

The linking of thinking across the environment, technology, strategy and social structure discourse sets the scene for understanding the fifth core concept theorists use in constructing their theories on the phenomenon of organisation, namely culture, which is presented following.

Embedding 'culture' in the study context

The four core organisation concepts discussed to date have used metaphoric analogy to help enrich understanding on the concepts of concern. This included images of organisations as machines, organisms, and systems. The notion of culture, although a core concept used by organisation theorists in developing theories on organisation, is also used as a metaphor for understanding the "processes of organising" (Weick, 1969). In other words, organisation as culture. As introduced in Chapter one, thinking on culture can be grouped on two levels, either as a variable of organisation or as a conceptualisation for organisation itself. The differences in thinking are expanded upon throughout this Chapter section.

Theories on culture are relevant to the study, as underpinning the customer focus program is a requirement for public sector agencies to "demonstrate their commitment by way of integrating customer focus objectives into strategic and operational plans, and taking steps to develop the required cultural and process changes" (Court, 1995). This quotation emerges government's underlying assumptions about culture, which are explored in the following discussion.

FUNCTIONALIST THINKING ON CULTURE

Discourse on culture presents an array of different, and at times conflicting, points of view. As Smircich (1983a:339) points out:

"The culture concept has been borrowed from anthropology, where there is no consensus on its meaning. It should be no surprise that there is also a variety in its application to organisation studies".

It is not possible to give full justice to the concept of culture in the confines of the present argument. Detailed arguments on the disparate views are found in the works of Rowlinson and Procter (1999), Whiteley (1995), Meek (1988), Smircich and Calás (1987), Schein (1985) and Smircich (1983a). What is important to this study is the nature of themes emerging from the culture discourse. Smircich and Calás (1987:229) term this approach as "less concerned with the content of culture literature and more concerned with its meaning and role in organisational theory". The recognition of diversity in the meaning and role that culture plays in organisation theory serves as a starting point from which to distill literature on culture.

Acknowledging diversity in perspectives, there is general agreement in the literature in defining the fundamental elements to culture. Whiteley (1995), for example, develops her argument on culture based on the 'social psychology' perspective of Schein (1985). According to Schein (1991:370), culture is:

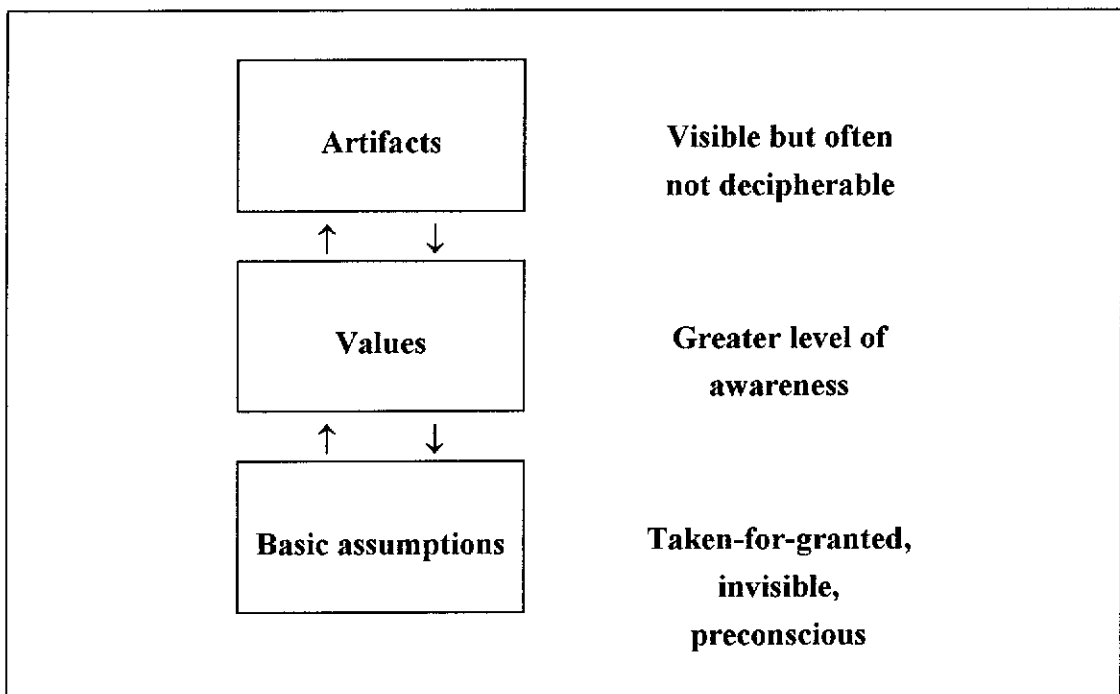
"The pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered or developed in learning to cope with its problems of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and therefore to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel in relation to these problems".

Schein's definition implies a unitary premise of basic assumptions which individuals hold on to as the correct way to act. The unitary view developed from early anthropological concerns to explain "why human beings are what they are, why they do what they do" (Schultz and Lavenda, 1987:5). Smircich (1983a:348) suggests this approach developed from a need for understanding the nature of knowledge:

"The concept of culture as developed in anthropology serves as an epistemological device in much the same way as the organismic metaphor serves as the basic for the development of the systems theory perspective on organisations".

As studies proceeded, the idea emerged that culture was not a sole distinguishing feature of human kind, but rather a distinct characteristic of groups on which to explain differences amongst groups. The notion of differences between groups is furthered to explain differences within groups, or in other words, "subcultures" (Whiteley, 1995:54; Burnes, 1992:286). These differences are what Schein (1985:14) refers to as the "three levels of culture" as depicted in Figure 2.2.

FIGURE 2.2: Schein's Three Levels of Culture



Source: Adapted from Schein (1991)

Schein (1985:14-21) explains the three levels in the following way:

- Artifacts are the most visible levels of culture - its constructed physical and social environment. Artifacts include the technological output created by group members, its written and spoken language, and overt behaviours.
- Values reflect group members' sense of what ought to be as distinct from what is. Many values are conscious and are explicitly articulated because they serve

a normative or moral function of guiding group members in how to deal with certain key situations.

- Assumptions are the often non-confrontable and non-debatable things that individuals take for granted as being reality. Basic assumptions guide behaviour and inform group members how to perceive, think about, and feel about things.

A key feature of Schein's model is the relationship amongst the three levels of culture. Hatch (1997:217) describes the relationship between the three levels in the following way.

"The essence of culture is its core of basic assumptions and established beliefs. This core reaches outwards through the values and behavioural norms that are recognised, responded to and maintained by members of the culture. The values and norms, in turn, influence the choices and other actions taken by cultural members. Finally, culturally guided action produces the artifacts".

As indicated in Figure 2.2 by way of arrows, assumptions help to shape values which in turn help to shape artifacts. Similarly, artifacts help to shape values which in turn help to shape assumptions. "At the same time values and assumptions are pushing their way up to the level of artifacts, the artifacts are being interpreted in ways that can transform the very values and assumptions that produce them in the first place" (Hatch, 1997:217). Hence, this view of culture resembles Weick's (1969) notion of 'organising' and Giddens' (1984) notion of 'structuration' discussed previously.

Given Schein's (1991) definition as representative of the elements to culture, it is necessary to consider the functionalist perspective on its meaning and role in organisation theory.

Wilson (1992:69) explains differences in perspectives on culture on the basis of two dimensions:

- "tangibility - intangibility. Culture is viewed as something that is directly manageable, or as something much deeper and more symbolic.
- applicable variable - analytical construct. Culture is a set of identifiable factors which can be managed directly or towards a given end, or can be understood in terms of symbols, subjective meaning, language and context".

Wilson's (1992) dimensional framework harmonises with Schein's (1991) definition in that the dimension of tangibility and intangibility relates to Schein's conceptions of artifacts and assumptions. A similar argument seems plausible in harmonising Wilson's applicable variable - analytic construct dimension within Schein's definition. In other words, meanings on culture within the two perspectives are related.

Taking culture to pertain to the same phenomenon in both Schein's (1991) and Wilson's (1992) view, differences in thinking emerge from investigating assumptions regarding the role played by culture in organisational functioning. For example, laying Wilson's two dimensions on top of one another, from the tangible and applicable variable perspectives, culture is assumed a 'real' and tangible entity which "can be created, measured and manipulated in order to enhance organisational effectiveness" (Meek, 1988:454). It is assumed that by "changing the organisational culture, the majority of current organisational problems will be solved" (Wilson, 1992:69). These beliefs are underpinned by a "passive view of human nature" where the interest in culture is "framed as tools for managerial control within a technical interest" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:236). As such, culture is objectified, taking on physical-like qualities as was argued previously for the notions of environment, strategy, technology and social structure.

Schein (1985) acknowledges historical factors to be vital for the study of culture and in so doing imposes a preordained structure to the history of organizational cultures, namely the story of a founder (Rowlinson and Procter, 1999). In other words, functionalist thinking on culture privileges the managerial point of view. The view of culture as an intangible, analytic construct is addressed shortly. What is required is further consideration of the ideas on culture as expressed from the managerial point of view.

Smircich and Calás (1987) and Smircich (1983a) characterise developments in thinking on culture as a variable in terms of two themes. The first theme, 'comparative management', views culture in terms of an external variable. The two main ideas within this theme are that:

- "organisations are manifestations of larger cultural systems" (Hatch, 1997:206); and

- "the national culture has an influence over the organisational context" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:236).

The second theme, termed 'corporate culture', views culture as an internal variable. "Although organisations are embedded within a wider cultural context, this theme emphasises the social-cultural qualities that develop *within* organisations; hence culture is conceived of as an internal attribute rather than an external factor that impinges on the organisation" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:237). Smircich and Calás (1987:237) go on to say "that organisations are treated as social instruments that produce goods and services and as a social system that produce that distinct cultural artifacts such as rituals, legends and ceremonies". Viewing culture in terms of social and technical properties underpins socio-technical thinking on organisation as discussed previously in the section - Functionalist Thinking on Technology. Recapitulatory, social-technical thinking views organisation metaphorically as organismic, existing within an environment with functional imperatives which need to be met in order to ensure survival.

Many contemporary writers, including Peters and Waterman (1982) in their popular publication "In Search of Excellence" support the assertion of culture as a variable. The belief is that organisations with strong cultures are more likely to be successful than those with weaker ones (Kotter and Heskett, 1992). Such beliefs underpin the phenomenon of Total Quality Management as expounded by Crosby (1979) and Deming (1982). Culture is a "symbolic device that can be used as a means to mobilise the energies of organisational members" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:238). Barley and Kunda (1992:382) characterise the thinking in terms of three central tenets:

- "economic performance in turbulent environments requires the commitment of employees who make no distinction between their own welfare and the welfare of the firm;
- strong cultures can be consciously designed and manipulated; and
- value conformity and emotional commitment (would) foster financial gain".

Although characterising culture as normative in orientation with practical interest (ideas congruent with an interpretive frame of reference), Barley and Kunda's three tenets are seen as underpinning a functionalist worldview. The words used in explaining the practical interest are allied in characteristics with ideas which

advocate ideological manipulation and control as an essential management strategy (Hatch, *et al*, 1999:371).

Smircich and Calás (1987:238) support this premise from the organisational communication perspective by suggesting "although the thinking on culture implies a symbolic interpretive orientation, they implicitly incorporate mechanistic assumptions and linear models of communication". They go on to explain the rationale for their assertion as follows:

"Symbols become a way of transmitting messages that affect organisational practice. Symbols are related to organisational culture in a quasi-causal fashion; researchers see these artifacts of culture as antecedent conditions that affect organisational effectiveness. Stories, legends and myths, although symbolic in form, project a static and almost physical quality" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:238).

Wilson (1992:9) explains the adoption of the variable view of culture as a result of the cultural context informing individuals' thinking.

"The dominant paradigm of structural functionalism led inevitably towards viewing organisations as self-contained entities within which the variables of managerial behaviour could be isolated and identified. Once identified, the variable effects of such variety of behaviour achieving (or failing to achieve) change could be mapped out".

In other words, culture from a functionalist perspective shares a concern for explaining and producing generalised law-like statements that aid in prediction, control and manageability across situations. Gregory (1983:360) explains the approach as follows:

"The structural functional paradigm adopts an organismic analogy of a culture and explains how cultural parts function to maintain the integrity of the group's social structure".

Meek (1988:459) adds to the argument by proposing "the link between culture, management and control is not solely due to structural functional theory *per se*. It is also due to the way in which selective aspects of the concept of culture have been borrowed from the structural functional tradition, coupled with the propensity (either

latent or manifest) of this theoretical paradigm to support the notion that culture can be used by leaders to control others in the achievement of organisational goals". This explanation of Meek is purposeful in explaining the apparent discourse paradox of Barley and Kunda (1992), between their espoused view of culture and their language in-use.

In sum, differences between Smircich and Calás' (1987) two variable themes lie in the external - internal orientation in thinking on culture. In other words, culture is either something "imported into the organisation from the broader environment or something created by management" (Meek, 1988:463). The similarity between the themes becomes evident in thinking about the paradigmatic assumptions on which the views are premised. Both variable themes imply culture in terms of symbolic forms of organisation which are the direct interests of management.

Hence, from the communication perspective, culture is expressed in terms of the well-used phrase "something an organisation has" (Hatch, 1987; Whiteley, 1995; Meek, 1988; Smircich and Calás, 1987). The something an organisation has manifests itself in terms of stability, routine and control. This view contrasts sharply with those of post industrialised organisational life which are characterised by "complex, paradoxical and even contradictory modes of understanding" (Jelinek, et al, 1983:331).

Challenging the thinking on culture as a variable is the view of culture as "root metaphor" (Smircich and Calás, 1987). The use of culture as metaphor shifts the thinking from the variable perspective to one that acknowledges a processual view of organisation, or in Weick's (1969) terms, organising. From this processual perspective, culture is conceived as something that the organisation 'is'. Culture not only pertains to the symbolic forms of organisations, but also to the processes by which symbols are created and reproduced. In Hatch's (1997:219) view, "symbols consist of both the tangible form and the wider meaning context which it is associated". It is the notion of culture as the context for meaning making and interpretation which challenges functionalist views as presented following.

SYMBOLIC INTERPRETIVIST THINKING ON CULTURE

Smircich (1985:57) poses the idea of culture as "paradigm for understanding organisations and ourselves". As such, Smircich's idea can be taken to mean culture as a perspective or "way of seeing" (Morgan, 1980:606). This premise takes

Smircich's use of the term "paradigm" to mean world view as coined by Kuhn (1962). As argued above, viewing culture from a variable frame of reference implies a functionalist paradigmatic worldview. In reference to Wilson's overlaid dimensional perspective of culture in terms of tangibility/applicable variable, both are arguably two partial views of the one world view, as both share a concern in culture as a "tool of management" (Nord, 1985:194).

In other words, regardless of whether a particular idea is viewed in terms of tangibility or applicable variable, each is premised on the same core assumptions of culture as "some form of management tool to be used to enhance productivity or competitiveness" (Harrison, 2000:427). Culture is conceived as either an objective fact, or as a social fact with tangible features, for managers' use in meeting their own ends. Whiteley (1995:24) terms this perspective in terms of a "reality constructed by themselves [managers], for themselves". Meek (1988:458) supports this notion by characterising the differences in thinking in terms of a "unifying and regulatory mechanism" and a "form of social control created and manipulated by management". Once again, both perspectives are conceived in terms of partial views of the same core assumptions (Whiteley, 2000a; Morgan, 1997).

Smircich's (1985) premise shifts the thinking on culture from a premise of control to one of process. The concern is not with the physical-like qualities of culture, rather its role in action and interaction in constructing and reconstructing organisational reality. Whiteley and Jordan (1990:62) conceptualise culture in the following way:

"Culture is to the organisation what personality is to the individual. It is the decision which groups of people make in order to resolve how they prefer to organise and control group thinking and group behaviour".

Rowlinson and Procter (1999:372) thicken the argument by asserting "to understand social reality we need to be less concerned with prediction and more with meanings and interpretations of actors who help to constitute social phenomena such as organisations". From this perspective, culture is "quintessentially about meaning and its creation, enactment, and change" (Berthon, et al, 2001:135). Hatch (1997:235) captures the essence of these thoughts when she states "you need to give up thinking of culture as an entity and trying to understand what it does. Instead, think of culture as a context of meaning making and interpretation". In Wilson's overlaid dimensional view, culture as intangible/analytic construct parallels with Rowlinson

and Procter's (1999), Berthon's (2001) and Hatch's (1997) notion of culture as contexts for meaning making and interpretation.

The entity and context views of culture are similar in the sense that both adopt Schein's (1985) understanding of 'basic assumptions and values' as influencing behaviour through their expression in behavioural norms as communicated through "symbols, myths, stories, and rituals" (Smircich, 1983a:353). The difference comes down to the way in which knowledge about culture is used. Knowledge from the symbolic interpretivist perspective opposes the notions of control, predictability and rationality, and by so doing, seeks to understand social phenomena as they emerge. Smircich (1983a:353) frames the difference in terms of a "mode of thought".

"This mode of thoughts adopts the idea of cultures as an epistemological device to frame the study of organisations as social phenomenon ... By using culture as root metaphor, [theorists] are influenced to consider organisations as a particular form of human expression ... The social or organisational world exists only as a pattern of symbolic relationships and meanings sustained through the continued processes of human interaction".

In other words, the key distinction between the entity and context views of organisation rests in the notion of knowledge and its role in the processes of organising. Within the 'root metaphor' view, Smircich and Calás (1987:234) propose three related themes on culture:

- Organisation cognition. Culture consists of shared knowledge; of a system of meanings that accompanies the behaviour and practices of a particular group.
- Organisational symbolism. Culture is a system of shared symbols of meanings; symbols are assumed as intertwined in meaningful relationships emanating from the activities of individuals in particular settings.
- Unconscious processes and organisation. Culture is an expression of unconscious psychological processes, analysed through the interplay between out-of-awareness processes and their conscious manifestation.

From a processual perspective, culture as root metaphor adopts metaphoric comparisons of organisation, not as physical entities but as social phenomena.

"Culture as root metaphor for organisation goes beyond the instrumental view of organisations derived from machine metaphor and the adaptive view derived from the organismic metaphor. Culture as root metaphor promotes a view of organisations as expressive forms, manifestations of the human consciousness" (Smircich, 1983a:347).

In comparison with thinking on culture as an entity, elsewhere Smircich (1983a:353) asserts:

"The mode of thought that underlies culture as root metaphor gives the social world much less concrete status. The social world is not assumed to have an objective, independent existence that imposes itself on human beings".

As a consequence, the adoption of the culture as root metaphor perspective has particular implication for the way in which, what Schein terms (1985) 'cultural artifacts', are viewed. Organisational symbols, myths, stories and rituals, are not taken to mean the visible, tangible and audible remains of behaviour grounded in cultural norms, values and assumptions. Rather, symbols, myths, stories and rituals are the "generative processes that yield and shape meanings that are fundamental to the very existence of organisation" (Smircich, 1983a:353). Culture (what an organisation is) is therefore a "contingent, contradictory, ambiguous, multivalent phenomenon" (Harrison, 2000:427).

The discourse on culture from the root metaphor perspective is useful to the study on two fronts.

First, it provides a methodological grounding for understanding the symbolic meaning of customer focus as derived from Top Management Team and Worker interpretations in the sense of what they say they do and what they are perceived to do. In other words, the language of individuals is viewed as a form of artifact, which, through interpretation and analysis, is indicative of the underlying values of group members.

Second, the discourse on culture serves as an indicator to characterise how individuals might translate thinking into practice. Viewing organisations as cultures, customer focus is assumed to reside in the artifacts, values, and assumptions, that sustain the organisational reality. As Schein (1991:374) suggests "if a group passes

on with conviction. elements of a new way of perceiving, thinking and feeling, we can assume that that group has had enough stability and has shared enough common experiences to have developed a culture". In other words, for customer focus to be characteristic of a group it would have to become a learned solution to problems. In their interactions with other group members, customer focus would be the stable response to solving problems.

Of particular relevance to the study are the ideas of shared knowledge and shared symbols of meaning, vested within the organisation cognition and organisational symbolism themes respectively, which warrant further explanation.

The organisation cognition perspective is relevant to study to support the use of language as an indicator of individuals intentions and actions. The organisation cognition perspective "assumes that the semantic fields of language contain the natives' world view and that what people do is related to what they think" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:240). From this perspective, "talk and text are seen to produce and reproduce the organisation" (Hatch, 1997:375), that is, the "shared knowledge" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:240). Organisations are treated as essentially "communicative, with language as a route to the thought patterns that are maintained through communication" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:239). Hence, language is a window to individual's world views. It is the alignment between managers' and workers' shared knowledge on intentions and action which is the focus of interest for this study.

The premise that Top Management Teams' language is representative of the organisational talk assumes a managerial hegemony. This assumes a functionalist perspective in that "structure is a fixture that exists independent of the processes that create and transform it" (Putnam, 1983b:36). However, this premise is adopted for investigative purposes only. The study investigates the alignment between the assumed managerial hegemony on customer focus and workers' points of view. In other words, whether the espoused cultural knowledge of managers is representative of the workers' cultural knowledge in practice. From a critical theory point of view, this is expressed as the "interface of the concrete, material reality and the social construction of reality" (Putnam, 1983b:36).

There are an emerging number of interpretive studies on the nature of work from the managerial perspective (Johnson, 2000; Alvesson, 1998; Butterfield, 1996; Isabella, 1990, Trujillo, 1983, Schall, 1983). However, as found by Detert (*et al*, 2000)

following a thorough review and synthesis of the organisational culture literature, there is little interpretive research aligning managerial perspectives with those of Workers. As Harris and Ogbonna (1998:78) writes, "the impact of change on this group [Workers] remains an under researched area of academic inquiry".

The theme of "organisational symbolism" (Smircich, 1983a) is related to organisation cognition, however the orientation of the perspective is "focused on interpreting the explicit or implicit understandings that underlie cultural activity" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:241). In other words, the organisation cognition perspective treats culture as shared knowledge, while the organisational symbolism perspective treats culture as shared symbols and meanings. Interest for the study with organisational symbolism lies in its approach in which latent understandings are manifested via the processes of interpretation, and linking of meanings to actual verbal actions. In other words, the shared knowledge of managers and workers are aligned on assumptions of language in the organisation cognition perspective. This alignment however, is understandable only through processes of interpretation and linking of meanings echoed in the organisational symbolism perspective. As Meek (1988:466) points out, "symbolism is a form of reference, a style of analysis in its own right". In other words, symbolism pertains to methodological, rather than conceptual, issues.

Returning to the contextual element giving rise to the discussion on culture, customer focus was introduced in context of a requirement of PSMO for public sector agencies to demonstrate commitment to the strategy by developing the required cultural and change processes. The directive assumes a link between customer focus and culture.

From this perspective, culture is linked with the interests of management and is perceived in terms of something that an organisation 'has'. "Culture is an organisational variable, the agenda concerns how to mould and shape internal culture in particular ways and how to change culture, consistent with managerial purposes" (Smircich, 1983a:346). This form of thinking on culture is premised on ideas of social structure manifested in Weber's notion of Bureaucracy. For example, human behaviour is assumed to be explainable in terms of reactions to external stimuli that give rise to given patterns of behaviour. In other words, "cultural parts function to maintain the integrity of a group's social structure" (Gregory, 1983:360). Kanter (1983:149) characterises this approach in terms of "pushing tradition".

Challenging the 'pushing tradition' thinking is the notion of culture as root metaphor. From this perspective, culture is simply conceptualised as a context for meaning making and interpretation. Action and shared meanings are perceived as creating and reproducing organisation. Krone (et al, 1987:29) capture the essence of culture in this sense when they state:

"Meanings are derived symbolically through the mutuality of experience and through negotiating consensual interpretations of organisational events and activities".

Such thinking leads to the assertion of culture in terms of what an organisation "is" (Smircich 1983a). Accordingly, "culture cannot be discovered or mechanically manipulated, it can only be described and interpreted" (Meek: 1988:464) or "understood" (Morgan, 1980:620).

The discourse on culture as viewed from the premise of its meaning and role in organisation theory serves as a platform that brings together a number of the major themes developed throughout the argument thus far. It is this notion of meanings and role of phenomena in the organisational discourse that serves as a useful framework for summarising the argument on organisation and the five associated core concepts of environment, strategy, technology, social structure and culture.

Summary

Chapter two has presented differing views on organisation and the five associated core concepts of environment, strategy, technology, social structure and culture. Different perspectives were considered under two frames of reference: functionalist and symbolic interpretivist. The frames allowed consideration of both functional and the deeper cultural ideas within organisation theory. As both frames see organisation in fundamentally different ways, so each presents different images of its constitutive elements. In brief, the dominant thinking embedded with the frames are as follows.

The functionalist sections treated the phenomena of interest as though they were physical-like entities. As discussed in the culture section, such thinking is characterised as a 'contents' approach. Accordingly, organisation is viewed as an entity comprised of a number of interrelated contents. Although different perspectives are identified and defined in the organisation discourse, the thinking is said to be partial perspectives pertaining to the one functionalist world view.

The symbolic interpretivist sections treated the phenomena of interest as constructions that emerge from the action and interaction of individuals. Interest is not on the constructions *per se*, rather in understanding the 'meanings' within the ideas and the processes of interaction that create and alter them. As such, symbolic interpretivist thinking is discerned from functionalist thinking on the basis of assumptions embedded within ideas about the nature of 'reality' and human nature.

Metaphoric analogy was seen to permeate thinking on organisation in both functionalist and symbolic interpretivist perspectives. Metaphorical analogy was seen as underpinning Smircich's (1983a:340) assertion that "all scientists create knowledge about the world through the drawing out of implications of different metaphoric insights for their subject of study". Functionalist perspectives were characterised as being either an instrumental view of organisation derived from machine metaphor, or an adaptive view derived from organismic metaphor. Symbolic interpretivist perspectives were characterised as expressive forms, manifestations of the human consciousness, derived from culture metaphor.

Thus, functionalism and symbolic interpretivism are two frames of reference, which, when taken together, are representative of what Smircich (1983a:339) terms an "assumptive context". An assumptive context is taken to mean the differences in root assumptions, latent or otherwise, in ideas pertaining to organisation and its constitutive elements. In other words, the study's assumptive context is construed on two frames of reference, 'functionalist' and 'symbolic interpretivist'. This is depicted in Figure 2.3.

FIGURE 2.3: Assumptive Context in Using the Organisation Discourse

Assumptive context	
Functionalist frame of reference	Symbolic Interpretivist frame of reference

A schema summarising the preceding argument is presented in Table 2.3, termed the 'Assumptive Context for Organisation Theory Thinking'. The schema considers the concept of organisation and the five associated core concepts of environment, strategy, technology, social structure and culture, in terms of properties. Dimensions of the properties are the two frames, functionalist and symbolic interpretivist. To thicken the frames, examples of illustrative language-in-use as used in the

organisational discourse is provided. Where possible, illustrative language-in-use is the commonsense language used in reference to organisation. Language in this form is an artifact; a manifestation of the latent or otherwise, assumptions and values

TABLE 2.3: Assumptive Context for Organisation Theory Thinking

Core organisation property	Dimensions to Functional Thinking	Dimensions to Symbolic Interpretivist Thinking
<p>Organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations as an objective reality that can be translated into facts • A rational, deterministic entity of control • Mechanistic, stable structure for the purpose of control. • Organismic, flexible structure for the purposes of survival • Closed or open systems • Focus of interest from a managerial point of view (tools of management) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations as a creation in the minds of individuals. • Process orientation in terms of enduring patterns of behaviour • A collective order through interpersonal negotiations and implicit understandings built up via shared experiences • Focus of interest is on meanings, interaction and shared understanding
<p>Organisational environment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deterministic influence of the environment • Survival of the fittest • Bounded rational decisions concerning functional imperatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enacted environments • The symbolic context that gives meaning to individuals
<p>Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rational, deliberate plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategy as a conscious formulation of the underlying corporate myth • The linking together of meaning and their representations • A collective image that can be acted upon

Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of technology • Complex or combination of techniques used to alter inputs into outputs • Technology determinism • Application of rational scientific findings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technology of production • Socially shaping production practices
Social structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed Framework • Unitary of structure • Stability • Complexity, formalisation, centralisation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporal, day-to-day interaction • Duality of structure • Stability a consequence of individuals' willingness to sustain stability
Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something the organisation 'has' • A variable that can be controlled and manipulated • A stable phenomenon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something the organisation 'is' • Shared view of the organisation • A dynamic process • The dominant way the organisation sees

The essence to Table 2.3 is conceptualised as follows:

- There are multiple perspectives for organisation and its constitutive elements.
- The multiple perspectives are characterised in the organisation literature by specific patterns of language.
- The specific patterns of language are viewed as frames of reference.
- Frames of references are manifestations of the deeper assumptions and values on which the patterns of language are created.
- Grouping of the patterns of language in terms of functionalist and symbolic interpretivist is posited as a framework for characterising organisation thinking in practice. In other words, language used by 'real' individuals can be interpreted on the framing of patterns of language in organisation discourse.

By way of summary, a number of key emergent themes within the assumptive context for organisation theory thinking are as follows:

- The assumptive context is concerned with discerning organised patterns of discourse.
- The two frames of reference are premised on a concern for understanding order amongst the patterning.
- The functionalist frame of reference is mainly concerned with types of organised life, which can be explained and measured through rational scientific principles. This frame is characterised as "a conservative path in which researchers focus on improved construct validity, careful selection and measurement of dependent variables, longitudinal and experimental research designs, and use of multi-variate statistics" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:231).
- The symbolic interpretive frame of reference is predominantly concerned with understanding social phenomena from the perspective of those constituting the social group. As such, interest is neither on objective nor objectified explanation, rather on the processes that create and reproduce the organisation. This frame of reference is characterised as a "radical approach that conceptualises organisations as socially constructed, investigates the symbolic nature of management, and focuses on processes that occur across the level of analysis" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:213).

Chapter three continues the application of paradigm to research by discussing the research methodology and this leads to Chapter four which produces the research design as an interactive part of the study.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Chapter two introduced the concept of paradigm as the basic belief system or worldview that guides action (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The review considered organisational discourse in terms of contrasting 'functionalist' and 'symbolic interpretivist' perspectives. It was posited that grouping of ideas on organising on these typologies also serves as a useful framework for analysing thinking embedded within data on which this study is grounded.

Functionalism and symbolic interpretivism are metaphors describing different belief systems that guide action. As demonstrated in Chapter two, a number of different ideas are grouped under the two headings, termed perspectives. Within any one paradigm, there may exist a number of differing perspectives. Whiteley (2000a) and Morgan (1980) support this premise by arguing for paradigm as a complete view of the world, and perspectives as partial worldviews. Partial worldviews, under certain conditions of industrialisation, may come to be perceived as a whole worldview. It is not, says Morgan (1980), until one experiences other partial worldviews that the whole view can be appreciated.

Plausibly, perspectives that appear divergent, for example views of organisations as either machine or biological organism, may in fact both be partial views of the same paradigm, based on the same "core assumptions" (Morgan 1980:607). These assumptions concern the nature of what it is that can be known (useful knowledge) and the methods by which this knowledge can come to be known. Both the machine and organic views of organisation are premised on the assumption that "the reality in organisational life rests on a network of ontologically 'real' relationships which are relatively ordered and cohesive" (Morgan, 1980:616). As such, machine and organic metaphors are perceived as two partial worldviews based on the same root assumptions; the functionalist paradigm.

The study's interest is in investigating the alignment in meanings individuals attribute to customer focus from two organisational contexts; the enacted premise and the received practice. Following is a reminder of the research questions and objectives.

Research Questions

- i) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Top Management Team enacted premise?
- ii) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Worker received practice?
- iii) What is the alignment in meanings between the enacted premise and received practice contexts?
- iv) What understandings emerge from the study to assist concerned change agents interested in aligning organisational intentions and actions?

More operationally, this study seeks to achieve practical research objectives.

Research Objectives

- i) To extract from the literature, both sociological and methodological, working constructs of customer focus related relationships.
- ii) To gather qualitative data based on emerging constructs from the sample Top Management Teams.
- iii) To gather qualitative data based on emerging constructs from the sample Workers.
- iv) To compare and contrast symbolic interpretations from the two sample groups.

When construing premise-to-received practice phenomena, interest is on the relational nature of organisation intentions and actions. Arguably, research practice could focus on what Smircich and Calás (1987:231) term "morphological analysis". From this view, intentions and actions could be reified against tangible organisational elements and alignment made based on statistical analyses. The approach is one of verification and explanation of an independently existing organisational reality, consistent with functionalist assumptions. Alternatively, if organisation is conceived as a construct in the minds of individuals, a processual orientation of understanding and description is required. As such, reality is "performed or accomplished through symbolic means" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:231), understandable only in terms of the meanings individuals of the system attribute to it. It is the later premise to which this study owes allegiance. The symbolic interpretivist perspective is the central theme developed in this Chapter.

Chapter three is inspired by Jung's (1976:580) musing:

"It is quite possible that we look at the world from the wrong side and that we might find the right answers by changing our point of view and looking at it from the other side, i.e., not from outside, but from inside".

Mapping out the terrain

The choice of any research methodology must be consistent with the paradigmatic assumptions concerning the nature of the phenomenon under investigation (Guba and Lincoln, 1994; Morgan and Smircich, 1980). As Putnam (1983a:7) puts it, "assumptions about reality form the foundation of social science research". There are numerous classification schemes clarifying the assumptions that organisational theorists bring to studies, including that of Burrell and Morgan (1979), Morgan and Smircich (1980), Putnam (1983b), Smircich (1983a), Guba and Lincoln (1994), and Denzin and Lincoln (1998a).

Emerging from the critiques are differences in the way authors "classify dominant trends, in their selection and reliance on philosophical assumptions, and in their application of general theories to specific academic disciplines" (Putnam, 1983b:32). This can be illustrated by briefly considering two classification schemes, those of Burrell and Morgan (1979) and Putnam (1983b).

Burrell and Morgan's (1979:1) schema is based on the central thesis that "all theories of organisation are based upon a philosophy of science and a theory of society". They frame this thinking in terms of two dimensions:

- assumptions about the nature of science, the objective-subjective dimension; and
- assumptions about the nature of society, the regulation-radical change dimension.

Taken together, the two dimension give rise to four distinct sociological paradigms. These are labelled radical humanist, radical structuralist, interpretive and functionalist. The four paradigms are distinguished on the basis of assumptions pertaining to ontology (nominalism - realism), epistemology (anti-positivism - positivism), human nature (voluntarism - determinism) and methodology (ideographic - nomothetic). The key features to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) typology are detailed in Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1: Assumptions Underlying Burrell and Morgan's (1979) Four Paradigms for the Analysis of Social Theory.

The sociology of radical change						
S U B J E C T I V E	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Radical Humanist</th> <th style="width: 50%; text-align: center;">Radical Structuralist</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society viewed as anti-human and it is concerned to articulate ways in which human beings can transcend the spiritual bonds and fetters which tie them into existing social patterns and thus realise their full potential. • Places emphasis on radical change, modes of domination, emancipation, deprivation and potentiality. • Committed to a view of society that emphasises the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements. • Views the social world from a perspective which tends to be nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist and ideographic. </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary society is characterised by fundamental conflicts which generate radical change through political and economic crises. It is through such conflict and change that emancipation of men from social structures in which they live is seen as coming about. • Focuses on the structural relationships within a realist social world (versus focusing upon consciousness). • Committed to radical change, emancipation and potentiality in an analysis which emphasises structural conflict, modes of domination, contradiction and deprivation. • Views the social world from a perspective which tends to be realist, positivist, determinist and nomothetic. </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Radical Humanist	Radical Structuralist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society viewed as anti-human and it is concerned to articulate ways in which human beings can transcend the spiritual bonds and fetters which tie them into existing social patterns and thus realise their full potential. • Places emphasis on radical change, modes of domination, emancipation, deprivation and potentiality. • Committed to a view of society that emphasises the importance of overthrowing or transcending the limitations of existing social arrangements. • Views the social world from a perspective which tends to be nominalist, anti-positivist, voluntarist and ideographic. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contemporary society is characterised by fundamental conflicts which generate radical change through political and economic crises. It is through such conflict and change that emancipation of men from social structures in which they live is seen as coming about. • Focuses on the structural relationships within a realist social world (versus focusing upon consciousness). • Committed to radical change, emancipation and potentiality in an analysis which emphasises structural conflict, modes of domination, contradiction and deprivation. • Views the social world from a perspective which tends to be realist, positivist, determinist and nomothetic. 	O b j e c t i v e
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The sociology of regulation						

Source: Adapted from Burrell and Morgan (1979)

Burrell and Morgan (1979:23-25) explain the relationship between the four paradigms in the following way.

"Each of the paradigms shares a common set of features with its neighbours on the horizontal and vertical axes in terms of one of the two dimensions but is differentiated on the other dimensions. For this reason they should be viewed as contiguous but separate - contiguous because of the shared characteristics, but separate because the differentiation is ... of sufficient importance to warrant treatment of the paradigms as distinct entities. ... The four paradigms are mutually exclusive. ... They offer different ways of seeing".

Putnam (1983b) proposes a two-fold schema based on Burrell and Morgan's assumptions about the nature of social science, informed by characteristics of other social researchers. She rejects Burrell and Morgan's notion of a two "dimensional model, their reliance on bipolar opposites to critique each paradigm and their claims that paradigms represent mutually exclusive alternatives" (Putnam, 1983b:34). Putnam's schema is framed on two paradigms; functionalism and interpretivism. Her classification schema distinguishes the two paradigms on the basis of three characteristics:

- views of social reality;
- assumptions concerning knowledge generation; and
- fundamental beliefs of organisation.

As Putnam (1983b:44) points out, "these differences ...emanate from global similarities across theories within a given paradigm; hence they may not apply to all schools of thought within each approach". The essence of Putnam's schema is detailed in Table 3.2.

TABLE 3.2: Assumptions Underlying Putnam's (1983b) Two Paradigms for the Analysis of Social Theory.

Characteristic	Functionalist Paradigm	Interpretive Paradigm
View of social reality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As concrete entities or social facts. Social reality exists 'out there' - external to the individual, taking form prior to any human activity. • Collectivities are external to individuals, taking static or immutable qualities in that their characteristics rarely change, at least not through their own volition. • Norms, values and roles treated as hard, tangible facts. • Individuals are the products of their environment, hence they respond to external stimuli in mechanically controlled ways. The external world determines, or at least shapes, individual options for appropriate behaviours. Individuals are reactive; participants who respond to externally controlled events rather than their own self interests. • Reify social processes by ignoring the creation of structures, by recasting individuals into fixed properties such as levels or departments, and by treating organisations as containers or entities. As such, social structures exist logically prior to individual actions. • Structures are fixtures that exist independent of the processes that create and transform them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As symbolic process created through ongoing actions and intersubjective meanings attributed to these actions. • Collectivities are social (symbolic) processes that evolve through streams of ongoing behaviour. • Norms, values and roles treated as artificial creations - ways of classifying and making sense of social actions. • Individuals create (shape) their own environments. They act and interpret their interactions with a sense of free will and choice; thus having a critical role in shaping environmental and organisational realities. • Reify structures as sets of complex, semi-autonomous relationships that originate from human interactions. Members use their actions and interactions to create levels and departments, and the procedures that have direct consequences on everyday behaviour. • Process and structures fuse into ongoing activities. Human processes constitute structures and these created patterns reflect back upon the dynamic social relationship.

TABLE 3.2 (Cont.)

<p>Assumptions concerning knowledge generation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a positivist aim to develop universal laws that can explain and predict external reality. • Acknowledge the human qualities of the cultural science but disregard the mental and social processes that shape cultural artifacts. • Attention directed to stable patterns that can explain and predict why collectives stick together. • Aims to develop value-free conclusions, with investigator bias controlled through the use of operational definitions of concepts of experimental procedures. • Measurement and research design adhere to methods in the natural sciences (physics, chemistry, biology), concerned with generalisable findings across diverse settings. • Typically employ linear models to test for causal linkages between sets of predefined variables. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adopt a relativistic aim to generate in depth understanding and explanation of a particular phenomenon. • Attention directed to the here and now processes of interaction and on the actor's accounts of their subjective experiences. • Attention directed on the meanings linked to the symbols and the interactions that create and alter them. • Aims to develop understanding of social phenomena by extracting the unique dimensions of situations. • Measurements and research design concerned with enhancing understanding of a particular event. Explanation centres primarily on the phenomenon under investigation and secondarily on similarities and differences across situations. • Causality (while not an essential component or research) emanates from the actor's worldview and proceeds inductively to construct non-linear representations of causality.
<p>Fundamental beliefs of organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisations and their structural properties treated as social facts or concrete entities. In a deterministic manner, the structure remains static and shapes the goals and activities of its members. • Adopts a unitary perspective by treating organisations as cooperative systems in pursuit of common interests and goals. • Individuals are instruments of purposeful-rational action aimed at technological effectiveness and efficiency. • Primary unit of analysis is the organisational entity; its social, psychological and economic characteristics become static properties rather than social processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collectivities treated as social processes through which members construct and construe reality. • Organisations conceived as coalitions of participants with different priorities. More likely to adopt a pluralistic perspective by treating organisations as an array of factionalised groups with diverse purposes and goals. • Individuals negotiate their goals, actions and meanings to achieve a common direction, but never abandon their different aims, they simply subjugate them to the immediate needs of the group. • For pluralistic researchers, the primary unit of analysis centres on values, goals and interactions that create and sustain coalitions.

Source: Adapted from Putnam, 1983b.

Putnam (1983b:53) argues the interpretive approach as "growing out of opposition to traditional positivist beliefs about social science". She conceives the two views as depending upon each, primarily for the reason of arguing each one's existence:

"The assumptions that define it [interpretivist] are global premises generated in opposition to functionalism. However, interpretivist and functionalist share some attributes, especially since they depend on one another for their existence" (Putnam, 1983b:53).

Hence, classification schemes aimed at clarifying assumptions that organisational theorists bring to studies can, themselves, be shown to differ, based on assumptions informing the selection of assumptions to draw distinctions between the different perspectives. This assertion, in a related sense, parallels Ranson's (et al, 1980) analysis of culture through interaction research, in that assumptions are taken to be both constituting and constitutive features of thought. The assumptions informing the selection of a classification schema to distinguish this study's methodology from other research perspectives is detailed following.

Assumptions on which to distinguish the study's research methodology

The methodology used in this study underpins the belief that human beings, "rather than responding to the social world, actively contribute to its creation" (Morgan and Smircich, 1980:498). Accordingly, any method which restricts investigation of the social world to a concrete, mechanistic and objective view, is inappropriate.

The research is not concerned with explanation, rather understanding of customer focus experiences from the point of view of those responsible for its implementation. This is characterised as discovery and exploration rather than verification and testing (Burrell and Morgan, 1979; Smircich and Calas, 1987). Procedures aimed at discovery and exploration fall under the general heading of "qualitative" (Morgan and Smircich, 1980; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994).

Qualitative research is defined as "any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:17). It is an approach where meaning to an observed phenomenon is sought and is "particularly useful in gaining insights into why individuals think in a particular way" (Morgan, 1988:25).

Krueger (1988:39) describes qualitative research in procedural terms in that it "allows the researcher to get in tune with the respondents and discover how they see reality". For example, the focus interview is one method which enables analysis of how others see 'reality' by collecting data on the way people define that 'reality'. This follows Thomas' (in Janowitz, 1996:xl) famous insight, "if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences". Thomas' insight provides the premise for aligning the 'enacted premise' and 'received practice'. In this study context, Top Management Team and Workers construct meanings towards customer focus and behave according to these constructions. It is by investigating these constructions of realities that a sense of alignment between what organisations say they do and what they are perceived to do is made. Arguably, borrowing Thomas' learning, *if customer focus premise is real, it will be real in the organisations received practice.*

Qualitative research is an ongoing process of interpretation and analysis. For studies on cultural aspects of organisation, it enables interpretation of emergent themes and thus, interpretation for the observed phenomenon. The context of action schema for understanding premise-to-received practice phenomena described in Chapter one is developed on assumptions of organising in cultural terms as root metaphor. As discussed in Chapter two, culture itself is conceived in different terms from the functionalist and symbolic interpretivist perspectives.

Morgan and Smircich (1980:491) suggest that "the case for any research method, whether quantitative or qualitative cannot be considered or presented in the abstract, because the choice and adequacy of a method embodies a variety of assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods by which that knowledge can be obtained, as well as a set of root assumptions about the nature of the phenomenon to be investigated". Guba and Lincoln (1994:105) make a similar claim by suggesting the term "qualitative" as less superior (theoretical) to paradigm and should be related more with method.

"Although 'qualitative' is implied as an umbrella term superior to the term 'paradigm' (and, indeed, that usage is not uncommon), it is our position that it is a term that ought to be reserved for a description of types of methods ... Paradigm we define as the basic belief system or world view that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways".

Denzin and Lincoln (1998a:4) support this view by suggesting "paradigm as an overarching philosophical system denoting particular ontology, epistemology and methodology". Accordingly, it is important to argue the conceptions of social 'reality' that the study owes allegiance. This will be made on the basis of paradigm, ontology, and epistemology, which roughly parallel with Putnam's (1983b) classification schema concerning views of social reality; assumptions concerning knowledge generation; and fundamental beliefs of organisation.

Research Paradigm

"Paradigms direct attention to science as having constellations of commitments, questions, methods and procedures that underlie and give direction to scientific work" (Popkewitz, 1984:33). Accordingly, the concept of paradigms provides a framework for interpreting and understanding the beliefs, values and assumptions that guide researchers actions.

The mental model of this study is based on the belief that there are multiple realities (ontology) in which the researcher and the subject create understandings (epistemology). "Since the researcher is a human engaged in studying the meaning of the social action of human beings" (Smith, 1983:7), the values and beliefs of the researcher concerning the nature of the phenomenon under investigation are important. "Realities are dependent on the observer for their existence, rather than discovering some objectively existing reality" (Pitman and Maxwell, 1992:738). Based on the above argument, this study is characterised as interpretive.

A summary of the methodological assumptions guiding the study is detailed in Table 3.3.

TABLE 3.3: Methodological Assumptions Guiding the Research

Paradigm	Mental model	Interpretive
Ontology	Nature of being	Subjective (Constructivism)
Epistemology	Nature of knowledge	Symbolic Interpretive

Putnam (1983a:8) asserts that to "understand [one's] own perspective we must see its boundaries and relationships to competing views". In other words, Putnam ascribes to the process of metaphorical analysis; the action of description of phenomena by

the things that they are not (Smircich, 1983a; Whiteley, 2000a). For comparative purposes, a number of critical assumptions distinguishing the functionalist and interpretivist perspectives are summarised in Table 3.4.

TABLE 3.4: Comparison Between the Functionalist and Interpretive Paradigms

Functionalist Paradigm	Interpretive Paradigm
Objective view of reality. Knowledge is an object reality that can be translated into facts.	Subjective view of social reality. Knowledge is a matter of construction by individuals. Reality is not a fact, rather a negotiated reality.
Deterministic view of human nature.	Voluntaristic view of human nature.
Regulatory view of society.	Regulatory view of society.
The search for knowledge is guided by rules.	Interpretation of phenomenon is through the development of categories of shared meaning.
Share concern for explanation and for producing useful knowledge.	Share concern for documenting processes and experiences through which people construct organisational reality.
Useful knowledge is generalisable law-like statements that aid in prediction, control and manageability across situations.	Useful knowledge aims at understanding what is 'going on' in a situation, while recognising that any account of what is going on is dependent on one's viewpoint since no situation can be fully known from only one point of view.

Source: Adapted from Putnam, (1983b), Morgan and Smircich (1980), and Burrell and Morgan (1979).

The only similarity between the two views is the regulatory view of society. What distinguishes the interpretive approach is the subjective view of social reality. That is, the study of behaviour is on subjects not objects. Further, the interpretivist may "accept the existence of objective structural features in social reality, but denies that they exert any determining influence over action, since the latter issue is from interpretations which generally vary between actors and contexts" (Jansen and Peshkin, 1992:698). Objective structural features equates with Denzin and Lincoln's

(1998a, 1998b) talk of "empirical materials", which includes language, behaviours, and actions.

As this study seeks to discover features of premise and received practice meanings, adoption of the interpretivist paradigm is the appropriate choice. In other words, the study approach is symbolism in the sense in seeks to understand the meaning of organisation to its members (Schein, 1985; Alvesson, 1998).

Ontological Assumptions

Ontological assumptions are concerned with the "essence of the phenomenon under investigation" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979:1). Burrell and Morgan (1979:1) conceive the issue of ontology in the following way:

"Social scientists ... are faced with a basic ontological question: whether the 'reality' to be investigated is external to the individual - imposing itself on individual consciousness from without - or the product of individual consciousness; whether reality is of an 'objective' nature, or the product of individual cognition; whether 'reality' is a given 'out there' in the world, or the product of one's mind".

This study is concerned with the phenomenon of customer focus as it occurs in differing contexts. It is not aimed at forming knowledge that specifies precise nature of relationships amongst contexts. In other words, the premise-to-received practice continuum aims at developing understanding of meanings individuals attribute to customer focus across differing organising contexts.

The participating public sector organisations (termed agencies) in this study were required to incorporate customer focus objectives into strategic and operational plans. Agencies had also been requested to develop customer service charters. As of February 1995 "more than 80 per cent of agencies had customer service charters" (Court, 1995:2). These requirements provided the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO) with an objective measure telling how well the customer focus strategy was being implemented across agencies.

However, this tells the customer focus story only partially.

PSMO in its communications also requested agencies to "take steps to develop the required cultural and process changes" (Court, 1995:2). To understand cultural change requires interpretation of the meanings individuals hold towards customer focus and the contexts in which they occur. This requires investigation of not only what is observed (first order constructs), but the social explanations for what is observed (second order constructs) (Schutz, 1962). In other words, "what is real [what is observed] is determined by the way people define that reality" [social interpretations]" (Thomas in Rose, 1974:54). Schwandt (1994) expresses the first and second order constructs of Schutz (1962) in terms of "senses". Schwandt (1994:121) explains the two senses as follows:

"A first order sense refers to ... the processes by which we make sense of or interpret our everyday world ... A second order sense refers to the process by which the social scientists attempts to make sense of the first."

Schwandt's (1994) second order sense is in Schutz's (1962) view the constructs of the constructs made by individuals in the social world.

Ontological assumptions concern the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. The premise-to-received practice schema was argued in Chapter one as an intersubjective construct which links individuals' perspectives. The schema is developed from a unitary view of organising where what is 'real' is conceived in terms of subjective premise and practiced contexts of meanings. These contexts of reality are depicted in Figure 3.1.

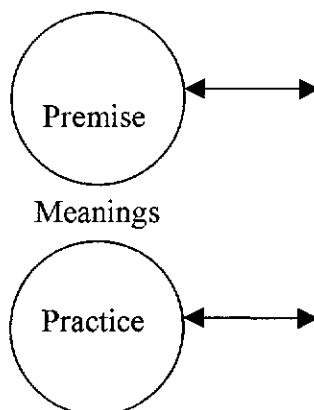
FIGURE 3.1: Premise and Practiced Contexts of Reality.



While some, including Argyris (1976), interpret these reality contexts as two separate identifiable phenomena, others, including Whiteley (1997) and Mumby (1988), perceive these as relational, made 'real' through the interpretations individuals assign to organisational experiences. Reciting Ford and Baucus (1987:373) from Chapter one, interpretations are "not determined by contextual factors; rather, contextual factors serve as part of the experience and reality through which ... interpretations

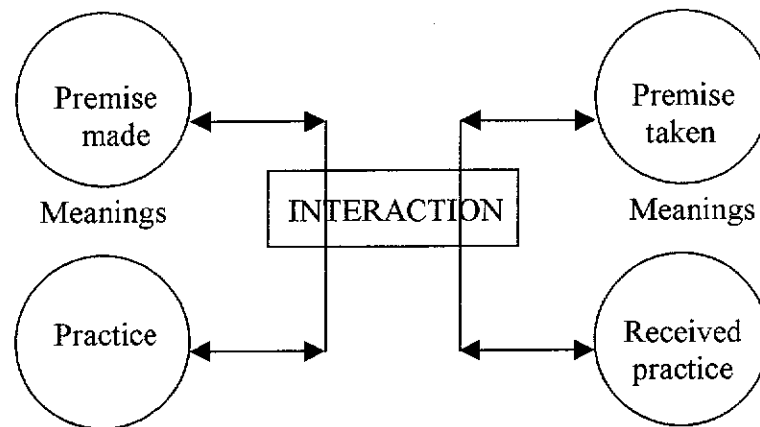
are informed and shaped". Accordingly, the nature of the reality is that which people define as 'real' in context. Meanings are central to social actions in that they inform actions taken. Meanings are conceived in terms of intra-personal hierarchies which are used by individuals to situate inter-personal action (Rose, 1988; Whiteley, 1997). Premise manifests as spoken metaphors while practice as action metaphors. This meaning centred perspective of reality is depicted in Figure 3.2.

FIGURE 3.2: Meaning Centred Approach for Understanding Premise and Practiced Contexts of Reality.



Adopting a pluralist or "relativist" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994:13) ontology, organisations are viewed as multiple realities. Meanings are made through processes of interaction. Through these dynamic social processes of organisational life, a third context of reality is posited, termed the received practice context. Building upon the contexts of enactment schema detailed in Chapter one (see Table 1.3), an interaction centred schema for understanding premise and received practice contexts of reality is construed. This perspective is depicted in Figure 3.3. Implicit in the interaction view is a Worker context of reality aligning with the premise context of Top Management Teams. In the "enactment" (Weick, 1969) perspective, premise is taken to be the processes of meaning making. Plausibly, in interaction, the context of meaning making aligns with the context of 'meaning taking'. In this study, meaning taking is construed as the enacted premise taken. The premise taken context is the surface manifestation of the received practice context. It is the alignment between enacted premise meanings and those received in practice that is the interest for this study.

FIGURE 3.3: Interaction Centred Schema for Understanding Premise and Received Practice Contexts of Reality.



Morgan and Smircich (1980:494) describe assumptions about humans as creators of their own realities in the following way:

"Individuals are not simply actors interpreting their situations in meaningful ways, for there are no situations other than those which individuals bring into being through their own creative activity. Individuals work together to create a shared 'reality', but that 'reality' is still a subjective construction capable of disappearing the moment its members cease to sustain it as such".

The ontological assumptions for this study owe allegiance, in general, to a subjective view of 'reality', and more specifically, to a perspective of 'reality' as a social construction.

"The social world is a continuous process, created afresh in each encounter of everyday life as individuals impose themselves on their world to establish a realm of meaningful definition. They do so through the medium of language, labels, actions and routines, which constitute symbolic modes of being in the world. Social reality is embedded in the nature and use of these modes of symbolic action. The realm of social affairs thus has no concrete status of any kind; it is a symbolic construction. Symbolic modes of being in the world, through the use of language, may result in the development of shared, but multiple realities, the status of which is fleeting, confined only to those moments in which they are actively constructed and sustained"
(Morgan and Smircich, 1980:494)

Epistemological Assumptions

Epistemology broadly refers to different ways of knowing and relations of knower and what can be known. The terms 'explanation' and 'understanding' are used for explaining contrasting modes of epistemologies.

"Explanation, as evident in the positivist science, follows the model of the natural or physical world in which hypothesis testing, experimentation, verification or falsification, and generalisations are expected.

Understanding relies on interpretation of subjective meanings, thus generalisations are not required or expected" (Smircich and Calás, 1987:232).

Viewing 'reality' as a socially constructed phenomenon, the nature of knowledge concerning the phenomenon being studied is interpretive. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:13) suggest that "all research is interpretive, guided by a set of beliefs and feelings about the world, and how it should be studied and understood". 'Reality' is not objective as in the positivist ontology, rather subjective in that people construct their own 'realities'. For any context, there are multiple realities.

To "understand the world of meaning, one must interpret it" (Schwandt, 1994:118). In other words, to gain understanding on the meanings individuals hold in the social world requires an interpretive approach. This is premised on a belief that the nature of the 'reality' under investigation is that which is construed in the minds of individuals. Customer focus is not viewed as a single 'reality' which can be captured through scientific and objective investigation. Rather, it is a phenomenon understandable only in terms of the meanings individuals bring in order to make sense of it through the interaction of premise and received practice contexts. In short, customer focus is a lens, a way of seeing.

Interpretation in the context of a study of meanings refers to the way in which "individuals make sense of their world through their communication behaviours" (Putnam, 1983b:31). This contrasts with traditional positivist approaches which treat interpretation as "inferences about human behaviour drawn from data" (Putnam, 1983b:31). Putnam (1983b:31) contrasts the difference in assumptions in the treatment of interpretation between the two views in the following way:

"Interpretation assumes a broader referent than simply integrating data with conclusions; it refers to the sources, nature, and methodology for investigating organisational life".

In investigating the alignment between premise meanings and meanings received in practice, this study is concerned with the interactive processes of organisational life and hence, understanding the contextual interpretations individuals take to them. This parallels with Broudy (*et al*, 1973:34) version of *verstehen* - interpretive understanding. Schwandt (1994:118) and Smith (1983:7) conceptualise *verstehen* as one of understanding the complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it. Recognising that lived experiences "take place in context; they are situationally limited and defined" (Natanson, 1970:106).

The term 'symbolic interpretive' refers to a particular mode of the interpretive inquiry. It is commonly used in the organisational communication school. As discussed in Chapter two, symbolic interpretive derives its meaning from a metaphoric view of organisation as culture; something that an organisation 'is'. Symbols are the means through which social reality is construed through interaction. "Meanings are derived symbolically through the mutuality of experience and through negotiating consensual interpretations for organisational events and activities" (Krone, *et al*, 1987:29). As such, "language does not interpret an already experienced, understood reality; rather language is constitutive of understanding" (Mumby, 1988:95). The epistemological assumptions governing this perspective are that:

- shared meanings guide behaviours;
- social meanings reside in the mutuality of experience;
- to understand phenomena requires understanding how consensual meanings constitute work group subcultures.

Symbolic interpretive, being an explicitly communicative approach, is posited by Putnam and Pacanowsky (1983:55) as an appropriate epistemological framework for studies investigating the relationship between organisational talk and action. On this basis, this study adopts the symbolic interpretive approach for investigating the premise-to-received practice relationship.

Validity/Trustworthiness of the Research

The importance in understanding differences between functionalist and interpretivist belief systems (see Table 3.4) is illuminated when considering the issue of research 'validity'. While the positivist epistemology, through objective inquiry, emphasises theory testing, the interpretivist epistemology, through qualitative inquiry, emphasises theory building. In arguing the soundness of any research, Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggest the use of an alternative construct, that of "trustworthiness".

Rather than pursuing 'truth' in the sense that causes and their effects have been isolated, Lincoln and Guba (1994:114) argue "where the aim of the study is to reconstruct the perspectives of those being studied, the analogous is demonstration that the researcher's interpretations of the data are credible to those who provided the data".

The methods to be employed (see Chapter four - research design) aim to preserve respondents' dominant constructs in the findings through a process of "thick description" (Geertz, 1973).

Modes of interpretive inquiry

The preceding discussion demonstrates, on the basis of paradigmatic, ontological and epistemological assumptions, the interpretive approach as the appropriate choice of methodology in investigating the alignment between organising intentions and actions. Prior to detailing the methods to be employed in this study, it is necessary to consider different schools of thought grouped under the general heading of interpretivism. As each school brings to the field of social science different assumptions concerning the role of inquiry and the nature of society, it is important to ground relevant fundamental ideas within the study context.

Two dominant schools of interpretive research referred to throughout the literature are termed the 'naturalistic' and 'critical' approaches (Bantz, 1993; Deetz and Kersten, 1983). Putnam (1983b) uses four characteristics, namely: goals of the research; assumptions of social order; treatment of contexts; and assumptions of meaning, to distinguish the naturalistic and critical approaches. Using these four characteristics as a frame of reference, and the works of Bantz (1983), and Deetz and Kersten (1983) as sources of insight, Table 3.5 details differences between naturalistic and critical research approaches. Noting as Bantz (1983:55) cautions, the clustering of

diverse schools of thought under umbrella terms results in considerable glossing of differences between and within them.

This study adopts the Critical Inquiry approach to describing and interpreting the relational nature of premise-to-received practice meaning systems as expounded in Table 3.5 and its following explanation.

TABLE 3.5: Differences between Naturalistic and Critical Interpretive Approaches for the Analysis of Social Theory.

Characteristic	Naturalistic Inquiry	Critical Inquiry
Goals of the research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the 'how' of organisational reality construction. • Primarily concerned with understanding the systems of meaning that exist and explaining the social processes by which they develop. • Seeks understanding of the symbol systems, rules and norms that account for everyday routines. • Learns the language of the actors, assembles their texts, and then derives a sense of unity from interpreting the whole in light of its parts. • Describes and seeks to explain surface and deeper meanings in organisational reality. • Accepts organisational reality without questioning its potential. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the 'why' of organisational reality construction. • Evaluation governs the processes of describing, explaining and understanding. • Seeks understanding by ascertaining why a particular meaning system exists by examining the conditions that necessitate its social construction and the advantages it affords to certain interests. • Aims for emancipation - to uncover communication distortion and free individuals from exploitation, alienation, and arbitrary forms of authority. • Through self reflection and exposure of deep seated structural problems, removes the blockages and contradictions that prevent individuals developing their own potential and constructing their own activities. • Critics of the status quo and act as visionaries for what social reality could become.

TABLE 3.5 (Cont.)

<p>Assumptions of social order</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focuses on the status quo, especially on the unity and cohesion that regulates current practices. • Adopts a regulation stance by treating orderly practices as the building blocks of social stability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also focuses on the way organisation reality is created and sustained, however extends this by examining the way the deep structures embedded in the status quo constrain behaviour. • Focus on the relationships and processes that form an entrenched logic of their own.
<p>Role of context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies behaviours streamed in historical contexts. • Transcend surface meanings in the immediate context to uncover underlying interpretations embedded in the history of events. • Insights derived from the penetrating everyday languages and practices to reveal the historical basis of social meaning. • An evolutionary context frames the interpretations that actors and researchers make of current practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Also studies behaviours streamed in historical contexts with two key exceptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - history is not neutral, it carries preconceptions of power that impact upon present and future events. - context extends beyond the historical development of organisational practices into the larger economic and societal framework in which organising occurs.
<p>Assumptions of meaning</p>	<p><i>Subjective meanings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social actions are manifested through an interactive process that reflects back upon subjective meanings. • Individuals assign meanings to their social actions (including language) they emit and receive. • Individuals make sense of their meanings <i>post-e-ri-ori</i> (after the fact) • Language and meaning are intertwined in the sense-making processes of everyday life; hence language as a way of creating social reality. <p><i>Consensual meanings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat organisations as either the process or the product of shared meanings; the ultimate goal is creating a social reality characterised by consensual meanings among individuals. • Shared meanings form the basis of organisational goals, norms and practices. • Aims to understand the nature and extent of consensus (shared meanings) and the way it is achieved. 	<p><i>Subjective meanings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delve beyond meanings created from social action (surface) to the deeper interpretations hidden below the surface. • Attempt to disclose self-deception, distorted information, and discrepancies between intended and manifest meanings. • Language is not neutral; it takes on an existence of its own as a medium for social domination and power. <p><i>Consensual meanings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rather than accept consensus as it appears, the basis for the shared meanings and the adequacy of consensus is questioned. • True consensus stems from rational examination of arguments, a full and mental understanding of the other, and the right of the other to take a role in dialogue as a full and equal partner.

Source: Adopted from Putnam (1983b), Bantz (1983), and Deetz and Kersten (1983).

GOALS OF THE STUDY

The study aim, to discover the alignment between what organisations say they do with what they are perceived to do concerning customer focus, underlies a critical approach to social inquiry. On the surface the study aim is aligned with naturalistic assumptions to the extent that the primary goal is to describe and interpret both surface and more underlying meanings in organisational reality. However, as discussed in the method section following, surface and underlying meanings are gained through analysis of members' language in-use.

The study aim in practice is aligned to the critical perspective as it is assumed through interpretation of the more underlying social meanings, that options will emerge describing what the perceived surface reality could become. As Jermier (1998:237) puts it "critical theory has a normative component that stresses not what is but what could be or should be". The notion of alignment underpins a critical perspective to question an assumed organisational status quo.

ASSUMPTIONS OF SOCIAL ORDER

This study is aligned with the critical perspective of social order by investigating the influence of the underlying contexts of meaning embedded in the status quo. The premise-to-received practice schema assumes an intra-subjective hierarchy of meanings, which is created and sustained through individuals' relatedness with one another. The locus of meaning making and interpretation resides in the more temporal dimensions of interpretation (Ransom, *et al*, 1980). This approach is consistent with the critical view which focuses on "processes and relationships that form an entrenched logic of their own" (Deetz and Kersten, 1983:48).

ROLE OF CONTEXT

Mumby (1988:37) picks up on the role of context aspect of critical research by using the notions of "choice *in* context" and "choice *of* context" as exemplars in explaining the difference between naturalistic and critical approaches. In Mumby's view, choice *in* context is characteristic of naturalistic inquiry which is generally limited to the surface, everyday activities of organising. This is reflected in Table 3.5 whereby naturalistic inquiry is characterised with a concern in understanding surface

meanings as they exist. Mumby (1988:37) terms this as a "concern to describe organisation based on in-situ, member generated concepts".

In contrast, choice *of* context moves beyond the surface meanings to create alternative ways of thinking about organisational experiences. This is achieved through interpretation of the relational nature between the surface and underlying structures of meaning. The choice *of* premise and received practice contexts of meaning was argued in Chapter one as Worker interpretations of customer focus enacted through interaction on Top Management Teams' enacted premise meanings. As such, the study is a critical approach in that choice *of* context avoids situating the study within a framework of meaning "pre-articulated by dominant management ideology" (Mumby, 1988:37).

ASSUMPTIONS OF MEANING

The premise-to-received practice schema fundamentally questions the basis for consensus of an assumed organisational status quo. Viewing organising as streams of continuous communication activities, this study accentuates interaction as the locus for understanding enacted premise and received practice phenomena. In a critical sense, the study seeks to describe and explain sources for the organisational status quo in line with Deetz and Kersten's (1983:161) thinking:

"The critical school ... has as its basic concern, examining the conditions that create and/or necessitate the existing organisational reality. In other words, research is not aimed at explaining reality to oneself, rather in explaining the sources of that reality. Rather than accepting organisational consensus, the critical researcher questions whether there is adequate ground for that consensus, should a consensus exist or is there a more fundamental incompatibility of interests and needs".

Thus, in understanding customer focus in practice, this study aims to ascertain the value premises (Worker received practice) underlying customer focus (Top Management Team premise). In other words, the choice *of* premise and received practice meaning contexts allows investigation of the relational features between surface and underlying organisational realities. Accordingly, the premise-to-received practice schema provides an alternative to traditional modes of studying organisational experiences in that the voices of all members are treated equally as the basis for understanding. In contrast to Detert (et al, 2000:861) analysis that most

research on culture is based on senior executives beliefs and values, the premise-to-received practice schema celebrates the pluralistic reality of modern organisations.

Methods of critical inquiry

The preceding argument on paradigm, ontology and epistemology provides the overarching study design. The study design is premised on constructivist beliefs mediated through a critical lens. Denzin and Lincoln (1998a:4) suggest paradigm represents the belief system that attaches the user to a particular worldview and that which cannot be easily moved between. Perspectives are less developed systems that can be more easily moved between. However, this provides only a partial design to the study. As Denzin and Lincoln (1998a:29) point out:

"A strategy on inquiry comprises a bundle of skills assumptions, and practices that researchers employ as they move from their paradigm to the empirical world. Strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion. At the same time, strategies of inquiry connect the researcher to specific methods of collecting and analysing empirical materials".

Making the methodological framework complete requires consideration of methods for collecting and analysing data. In other words, "the preferred way for putting the strategy into motion" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:29).

Morse (1998:62) writes about research strategies in terms of "tools". She suggests "it is the researchers responsibility to understand the variety available and the different purposes of each strategy, to appreciate in advance the ramifications of selecting one method over another, and to become astute in the selection of one method over another". In other words, choice of strategy is dependent upon the nature of the research question. A framework guiding selection of research strategy based on the nature of the research question is provided by Morse (1998:63). This framework is detailed in Table 3.6

TABLE 3.6: Framework for Major Types of Qualitative Strategies.

Type of research question	Strategy	Paradigm	Method	Other data sources
Meaning questions – eliciting the essence of experiences	phenomenology	philosophy (phenomenology)	audio-taped conversations; written anecdotes of personal experiences	phenomenological literature; philosophical reflections; poetry; art
Descriptive questions – of values, beliefs, practices of a cultural group	ethnography	anthropology (culture)	unstructured interviews; participant observation; field notes	documents; records; photography; maps; genealogies; social network diagrams
Process questions – experience over time or change, may have stages or phases	grounded theory	sociology (symbolic interactionism)	interview (tape recorded)	participant observation; memoing; diary
Questions regarding verbal interaction and dialogue	ethnomethodology; discourse analysis	semiotics	dialogue (audio/video recording)	observation; field notes
Behavioural questions Macro Micro	participant observation qualitative ethnology	anthropology zoology	observations; field notes observation	interviews; photography videotape; note taking

Source: Morse, 1998:63.

The study owes allegiance to the constructivist ontology, based on the belief of the existence of multiple realities whereby the research act is epistemologically interpretive, aimed at generating understanding. Following the tenets of constructivist and interpretive knowledge, a qualitative methodology is used. Viewing organising as explicitly communicative, the research strategy adopts a symbolic interpretive approach. Morse (1998) uses the label symbolic interactionism (as opposed to interpretivism) to describe a particular worldview. In this study, interpretivism is used as the umbrella term which informs the choice of research methodologies from a symbolic interpretive perspective.

The research questions investigate the alignment between premise and received practice meanings contexts using customer focus as the 'topic' (Bittner, 1974) for inquiry. The research questions fall within Morse's (1998) classification of process. Process in this context is aligned with Weick's (1969:90) construct of organising.

"Organisation is the way it runs through the processes of organising. These processes, which consist of interlocked behaviours, are related and form a system. The relationship of mutual causation that make the separate

processes into a system constitute the controls of the system ... It must be remembered that it is relationships rather than processes that control the fate of any system".

Given the research questions are concerned with process and the study's allegiance to symbolic interpretivism, the choice of research strategy is "grounded theory" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is a "*general methodology* for developing theory that is grounded in data systematically gathered and analysed" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:158).

Emphasis of grounded theory is on "constant comparative analysis" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:21), which is simply defined as a "general method of comparative analysis" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998:159). Employing constant comparative analysis, the methodology aims for theory development. This is achieved through verification of statements of relationships between concepts grounded from data. As Strauss and Corbin (1998:161) argue, comparative method is more than merely descriptive, it emphasises conceptualisation rather than description.

While grounded theory emerges as an appropriate choice of research strategy for studying the alignment of premise and received practice contexts, emphasis on data conceptualisation risks the loss of meanings in respondents' perceptions. Rather than pursue theory development, the study seeks "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of the customer focus phenomenon. Constant comparison analysis of premise and received practice contexts aligns with the study methodology to the extent that theory emerges from data (in the pursuit of understanding), rather than theory driving the generation of data (verification of an existing 'out there' reality). In other words, constant comparative analysis provides a premise for data interpretation.

The techniques of grounded theory as described by Strauss and Corbin (1998, 1990) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) inform the research design (see Chapter four), however these are not exclusive. The study holds to the thinking of Denzin and Lincoln (1998b:40) in their critique of Huberman and Miles' (1998) model for management, analysis and interpretation of qualitative data, in that the "tools are not at issue, only what is done with them".

Locating the method as principally grounded theory forms the principal for the study's methodology. However, consistent with qualitative research approaches where the interest is on "studying natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or

interpret phenomenon in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a and b; Guba and Lincoln, 1989), the study employs multiple methods.

The preference for employing multiply methods is attributed to the study's interest in understanding from participants' points of view. Guba and Lincoln (1989:175) provide insights for this position in the following quotation:

"Constructivists are unwilling to assume that they know enough about the time/context frame prior to know what questions to ask. That is, it is not possible to pursue someone else's emic construction with a set of predetermined questions based solely on the inquirer's etic construction. If constructivists did know, it would, of course, be possible to identify appropriate framed instruments. But constructivists typically enter the frame as learners, not claiming to know preordinately what is salient. Another way to say this is that, whereas positivists begin an inquiry knowing (in principle) what they don't know, constructivists typically face the prospect of not knowing what it is they don't know".

The term applied for employing multiple methods in the constructivist perspective is "triangulation" (Huberman and Miles, 1998; Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a, Stake, 1988). As Denzin and Lincoln (1998a:4) point out:

"Triangulation is not a tool or strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation. The combination of multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study is best understood, then, as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth and depth to investigation".

Stake (1988:97) clarifies the notion when he states:

"Triangulation has been generally considered as a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation. But, acknowledging that no observations or interpretations are perfectly repeatable, triangulation services also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen".

Noting triangulation is conventionally assumed as the use of multiple methods in the study of the same object, Denzin (1978:294) mindfully points out that this is only

one form of the strategy. He adopts a broader definition to the notion by conceiving triangulation as "involving varieties of data, investigators, theories, as well as methodologies". The principle means of triangulation for this study is by data sources, with secondary triangulation achieved through employing a variety of qualitative methods.

While grounded theory provides the overarching methodological strategy, interest is in making sense of the data through "thick description" (Geertz, 1973). Such a position locates techniques of process for the study along classical lines of hermeneutics (Heidegger, 1978). Hermeneutics is used in Heidegger's (1978:86) derivative sense of the Being of Dasein (existence); "the methodology of the historical humanistic disciplines".

The subtle distinction between grounded theory and hermeneutics is the basis for choice of methods employed in the study. The study employs the use of multiple qualitative methods as a tool for triangulation purposes. The hermeneutic emphasis is to generate understanding and interpretation through thick description of the data. The grounded theory emphasis is to explain the social processes in the two contexts under investigation. This is achieved through analysis of alignment in the premise-to-received practice customer focus relationship.

The approach described above is supported by Wilson and Hutchinson (1991:268) who explain the triangulation of the two qualitative methods as follows:

"The aims of the hermeneutics position of [a] study are to accurately describe and interpret participants' meanings and practices, while the grounded theory portion seeks to accurately describe and explain basic social processes, phases and properties".

Accordingly, the method of data analysis employed is based on "criteria of grounded theory" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998a:27) in terms of data generations (dimensions, properties and categories), but less concerned with the analytic procedures of "axial coding" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) - see Chapter four on research design.

Strengths and weaknesses

The preceding discussion has surfaced different assumptions underlying quantitative and qualitative research designs. The discussion has argued the symbolic

interpretive approach as an appropriate epistemological framework for investigating espoused-to-received practice relationships. Woods (1992:375) suggests "the fact that the symbolic interpretive researcher has a self, engages in interaction, and interprets and imbues meaning gives rise to a number of dilemmas in the researcher role". Handled sensitively though, these can be a source of strength. It is important therefore to consider strengths and weakness in using qualitative practices for investigating the relationship between organisational intentions and actions.

Chadwick (et al, 1984) suggest three key strengths to qualitative research:

- i) viewing behaviour in its natural setting;
- ii) depth of understanding; and
- iii) flexibility.

Viewing people in their natural setting creates for richer experiential contexts. Depth of understanding refers to methods that force the researcher to come to see the world from the native's point of view.

These strengths however, also serve as potential weaknesses. Woods (1992:375), for example, suggests a tension between "involvement, immersion and empathy on the one hand, and scientific appraisal and objectivity on the other". There is a risk that the researcher's perspective is distorted by the partial view of their subjects.

A balance between involvement and distance will be achieved through two principal means. The first is through the use of triangulation. Hall and Rist (1999:297) suggest "any strategy of triangulation that adds a system of theoretical/methodological checks and balances to a study lends a strength to that study". The principal method of triangulation for the study is by data sources, with secondary triangulation through the deployment of a variety of methods (interview and observation). The second means of balancing involvement and distance is through "thick description" (Geertz, 1973) of events.

Flexibility, in Chadwick's (et al, 1984:212) view, refers to the situation whereby a "researcher living with a group or in a community may experience and comprehend events and conditions not even considered before the field work began". Flexibility resonates with Denzin and Lincoln's (1998a:29) description of qualitative research as "endlessly creative and interpretive". The view here is that in order to understand as fully as possible the dynamics of an organisation, it is vital to develop an

appreciation of the perspective and interpretations of individuals and groups of individuals within it.

While qualitative methods allow for understanding and discovery (as opposed to verification), the approach presents a number of potential weaknesses. Creswell (1994) considers these weaknesses in terms of external validity and reliability.

The study seeks analysis of meanings which Worker assign to their social world as they seek to cope and maintain membership in the face of Top Management Teams attempt to implement a customer focus strategy. Emphasis in the research context is to form unique interpretations for events as they unfold from respondent points of view. The study assumes individuals construct their own reality and then respond to that reality based on the meaning it has for them in each specific context. There is no single reality existing independently outside of individuals' awareness of it. Accordingly, generalisability and transferability of the study to other contexts is problematic. What is transferable however, is the methods and analysis underlying the study. As Marshall and Rossman (1995:144) point out, by stating the theoretical parameters of the research, "those who make policy or design research studies within those same parameters can determine whether or not the cases described can be generalised for new research policy and transferred to other settings, while the reader or user of specific research can see how research ties into a body of theory". The problematic weaknesses of the study in terms of limited generalizability of findings from the study and limitations in replicating the study serve as a source of strength in documenting the research methods (see Chapter four).

Summary

Informed by the literature on organisation and organising in Chapter two, a research methodology triangulating hermeneutic and symbolic interpretive assumptions is chosen as appropriate in furthering understanding on the premise-to-received practice relationship.

The study aims to generate useful knowledge concerning the ability of organisations to change and innovate according to an espoused customer focus paradigmatic reform. This Chapter has surfaced the study's underlying assumptions in investigating organising through the metaphor of customer focus. "What individuals take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth is created, not discovered, by the mind" (Schwandt, 1994:125). The mental

model guiding this study is based on the belief that there are multiple realities (ontology) in which the researcher and the subject create understandings (epistemology).

In building the paradigmatic framework for the study, consideration of methodological issues was made. The case for a qualitative methodology was presented consistent with the view of Vidich and Lyman (1994) who suggest "qualitative social research entails the attitude of detachment toward society that permits the sociologists to observe the conduct of self and others, to understand the mechanisms of social processes, and to comprehend and explain why both actors and processes are as they are". Understanding is created through Heideggerian hermeneutics and explanation through the principle of constant comparative analysis of grounded research (Whiteley, 2000b).

Chapter four deals with research design features in more depth, linking design decisions to the theories and paradigmatic decisions detailed in Chapter three. To order the Chapter, Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) model for structuring research design was adopted.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction

Chapter three detailed choice decisions in adoption of a constructivist ontology, symbolic interpretivist epistemology, and qualitative methodology, to answer the research questions:

Research Questions

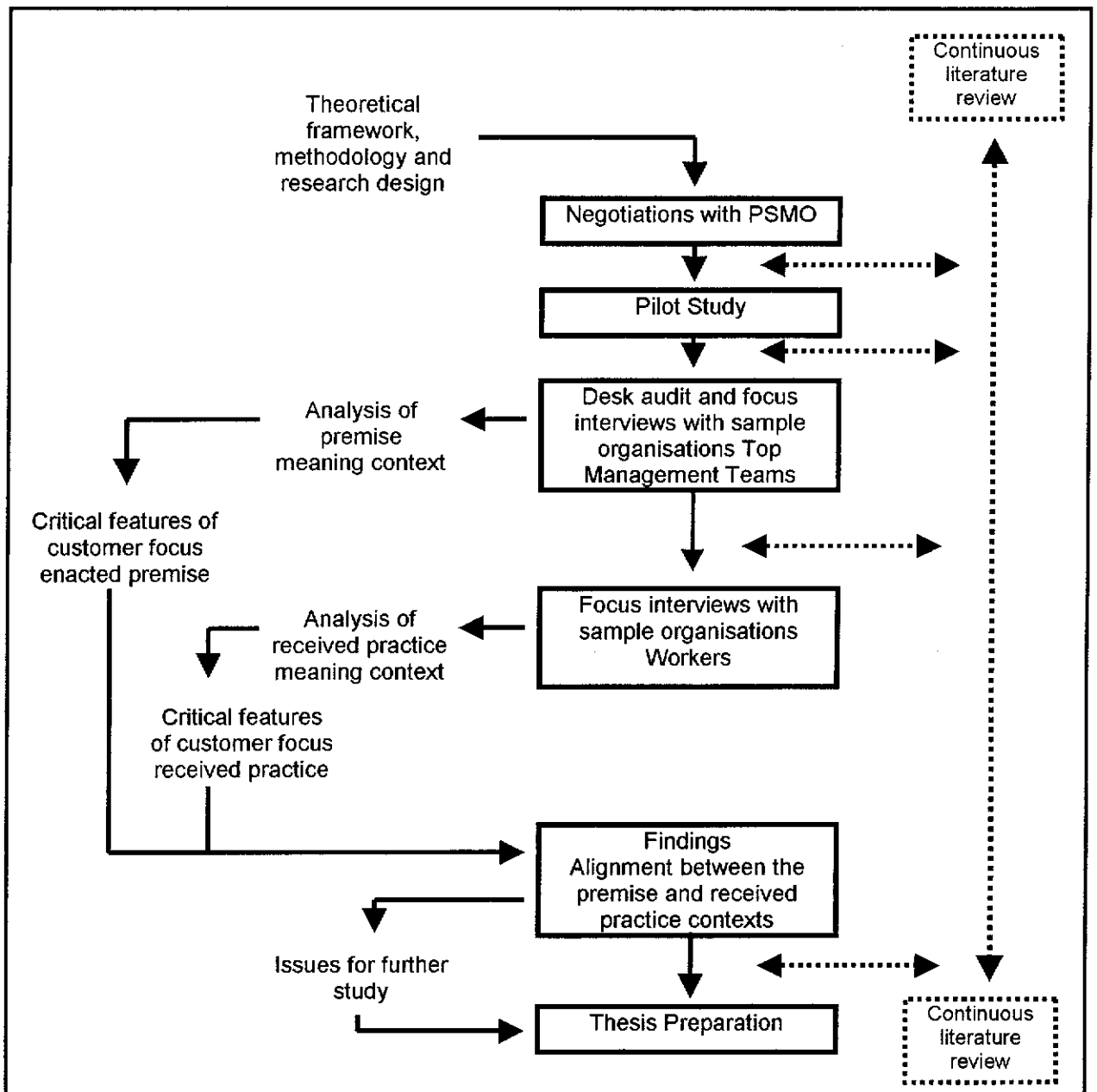
- i) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Top Management Team enacted premise?
- ii) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Worker received practice?
- iii) What is the alignment in meanings between the enacted premise and received practice contexts?
- iv) What understandings emerge from the study to assist concerned change agents interested in aligning organisational intentions and actions?

This Chapter details the research design and procedures.

A sample of six Western Australian Public Sector agencies was selected from a total population of 300 statutory authorities, departments and agencies (Government of Western Australia 1993a:1). The study was stratified into two major groups, called the Top Management Team and Worker groups. Triangulation with the government initiated customer focus strategy was effected. Data collection was primarily in-depth focus interviewing. Data analysis reflected "qualitative content analysis" (Byers and Wilcox, 1991) conventions.

The research design is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1: Design of Research Activities and Outcomes



Structure for research design

Similar studies (Johnson, 2000; Alvesson, 1998; Butterfield, et al, 1996; Isabella, 1990; Sutton, 1987; Bartunek, 1984) have focused on interpretation schemes in order to understand key organisational events which support the methodology and assumptions used in this study. These interpretive studies have varied in their focus of interest, which include the effects of managers understanding of culture on strategy development and strategic change (Johnson, 2000), managers understanding of the business concept as an organisational symbol (Alvesson, 1998), interpretations of

managers as change unfolds (Isabella, 1990), first and second order change in interpretive schemes within a religious order (Bartunek, 1984) and the influence of leaders' interpretations on the relationship between dying organisations and their members, over members' shared perceptions of that relationship (Sutton, 1987). Within this frame, the study is unique in three regards.

First, in its equal treatment of Top Management Team and Worker interpretations. Second, through its focus on interpretation schemes as a symbolic contextual action. Third, through the assertion of a received practice context of meaning (see Chapter one for explanation). Through analysis of enacted premise and received practice meaning contexts, a sense of alignment between what organisations say they do and what they are perceived to do, is able to be interpreted.

Denzin and Lincoln (1998c:xii) suggest four basic questions structure the issue of research design as follows:

- i) How will the design connect to the paradigm being used?;
- ii) Who or what will be studied?;
- iii) What strategies of inquiry will be used?; and
- iv) What methods or tools will be used for collecting and analysing empirical materials?

This Chapter details the multiple practices and methods of analysis employed in context with these four basic design questions.

Mapping out the research design and procedures terrain

A reminder of the issues studied earlier allows the theory behind the study to be connected to the research design.

As stated in Chapters one and two, the study aims to discover the alignment between what organisations say they do with what they are perceived to do concerning customer focus. What organisations say they do, or in other words the organisational talk, is gained from interviews with organisations' Top Management Teams responsible for customer focus implementation. What organisations are perceived to do, or in other words the organisational walk in practice, is gained from interviews with Workers. Through interpretation of the data, a sense of alignment between the organisational talk and walk is gained.

The metaphor, 'walking the talk', is coined in contemporary literatures as a causal feature of organisational life. The phenomenon is associated with workplace stress (Marino, 1997), continuous improvement efforts (Maguire, 1996), productivity, entrepreneurship and teamwork (Carr, 1994; Frohman, 1996; Donnelly and Kezsbom, 1994); "real" partnerships (Markus, 1994); work life benefit planning (Sladek, 1995); culture (Ludeman, 1993; Tichy and Sherman, 1993); employee morale/ loyalty (King, 1992; Kennedy, 1994); and customer focus (Connellan, 1997, Fugel, 1996).

A theme emerging from the literature is an assumed relationship between organisational effectiveness and managers 'walking the talk', as illustrated in the following quotations.

"Managers who have tried - or are in the midst of - a continuous improvement effort have heard a hundred times that they must: create and communicate a vision, establish a sense of urgency, empower others, devise a workable strategy to achieve the vision, lead the process, and pursue short-term wins. Yet despite high awareness of these success factors, efforts to foster continuous improvement are still failing. What's missing? Usually, it's a focus on managing what matters. The two critical elements of managing what matters are the right talk and the right walk" (Maguire, 1996:20).

"'Customer partnership seems so unusual' is a comment on our industry's reluctance to move beyond talk and into action. For the apparel industry to get serious about partnerships as a way of life will require much more from both customers and suppliers. Companies that talk partnership but practice adversarial relationships create dissatisfied partners. All it takes is one genuine partner to expose the pretenders. Time and results will separate partners who act from those who talk" (Markus, 1994:98).

"Especially with Generation X, the twentysomethings, loyalty is to individuals, rarely to institutions...Generation X has individually and collectively decided that companies can't be trusted. Companies do not 'walk their talk'" (Kennedy, 1994:11).

Literature on 'walking the talk' appears to advocate a 'one best way' for organising, reminiscent of Classical/Scientific Management (Taylor, 1947; Weber, 1947; Fayol, 1949). 'Walking the talk' emerges as a means to realise organisational success by management single-mindedly pursuing solutions to presenting problems. What organisations accomplish is taken-for-granted as a managerial prerogative, while the voices of Workers are silenced.

In effect, many contemporary writers reify 'walking the talk' in a technical sense as an organisational variable that can be manipulated to implemented organisational strategy (Zerbe, *et al*, 1998). Alternatively, 'walking the talk' can be viewed as the ongoing processes of interaction. This perspective assumes that what occurs in organisations is a consequence of the dynamic, ongoing, interaction processes through which individuals interpret situations and make them meaningful. This premise was the foundation on which the premise-to-received practice schema described in Chapter one was grounded.

The key elements to the research are summarised as follows:

- i) The context for the study is across several government agencies within the Western Australian Public Sector.
- ii) Customer focus is the phenomenon under investigation.
- iii) Interviews (verbal accounts of actions) are the chief source of observational data.
- iv) Verbal accounts of actions from managers are taken to be representative of the organisational talk.
- v) Verbal accounts of actions from Workers are taken to be representative of the organisational walk.

Consistent with the symbolic interpretivist paradigm and adoption of a grounded theory strategy, the primary method of data collection is interview as developed in context of Denzin and Lincoln's (1998c) four research design questions.

Connecting the research design to the paradigm in use

Chapter one developed a schema for understanding the premise-to-received practice relationship. The schema was based on metaphoric thinking of organisations as cultures. Assumptions underlying the model were articulated at the end of the

Chapter. Based on the assumptions, the study posits five key assertions in context of customer focus:

- Customer focus is posited to exist (or ceases to exist) as long as the contexts of meaning (premise-to-received practice) continue to produce and reproduce it through interaction.
- The degree to which customer focus is embedded within the organisation contexts of meaning are ascertained through analysis of the social, in particular, the communication system.
- Customer focus is made understandable (or in other words, gains its 'understandability') through analysis of meanings, latent or otherwise, interpreted from the enacted premise and received practice organising contexts.
- The degree of customer focus existence is determined by the alignment of Top Management Team premise with Worker received practice.
- The greater the alignment, the more likely that customer focus has become buried and internalised by members of the organisation as the correct way to act. The lower the alignment, the greater the danger that assumptions continue to be made and accepted at a surface level with no shift in the underlying collective sense of understanding.

The essence to these assertions are expounded following in order to illustrate the connection between the research design and the paradigm in use.

THE PHENOMENON OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

A theme emerging from the marketing literature suggests that firms of all types are using higher levels of service quality as an effective means to differentiate themselves from their competitors (Johlke and Duhan, 2000; Berry and Parasuraman, 1991). Research and writings in the field have shifted in focus from 'product' to 'service'. Parasuraman and Grewal (2000:10) capture this sense when they suggest "the focus is now shifting from merely selling to customers to serving them effectively".

Researchers are paying increased attention to methods of creating a customer focused work environment (Hartline, *et al*, 2000) or "customer orientation" (Jaworski and Kohli, 1993). A study by Zerbe (*et al*, 1998) on airline service employees suggests worker satisfaction with both leadership and work demands are strong predictors of service behaviour. Hartline (*et al*, 2000:36) suggest a customer orientation "hinges

on finding methods of disseminating the firm's customer oriented values and beliefs in a way that inspires customer contact employees to be customer focused".

While many researchers and theorists refer to a 'service culture' or 'service orientation', few have formally defined or operationalised the construct (Zerbe, *et al*, 1998:169). Those that have, including Hartline (*et al*, 2000) and Zerbe (*et al*, 1998) follow the "corporate culturism" (Willmott, 1993) view of Peters and Waterman (1982). From this functionalist stance, service culture is advanced as essentially a management strategy for the purposes of manipulation and control (Rowlinson and Procter, 1999). Alternatively, to understand what customer focus means to individuals calls for methods which facilitate exploration of not only what customer focus is perceived to be but also the meanings people hold toward it.

Symbolic interpretivism, as a qualitative approach, parallels the principles of "symbolic interactionism" (Blumer, 1969). In Blumer's (1969:2) words, three central premises to symbolic interactionism are:

- "human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them;
- the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the interactions one has with one's fellows; and
- meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretive process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters".

Woods (1992:338) adds to the argument by suggesting, "symbols are signs, language, gestures, or anything that conveys meaning, and the meaning is constructed in social interaction". Mumby (1988:14) encapsulates these principles in the following way:

"My most basic premise is that meaning is produced through communication. That is, meaning is neither conveyed through communication, nor is it the product of individual interpretation or an objectively existing entity outside of social interaction. In an organisational context, communication is the process through which meaning is created and, over time, sedimented".

The three central principles of Blumer are appropriate for understanding the premise-to-received practice model argued in Chapter one, using discourse as the symbolic means by which to interpret meanings.

Care needs to be taken in interpreting meaning from discourse. For illustrative purposes, consider the meaning that may be interpreted from the everyday observation of hearing the response 'yes' to an experience/event described by another. On one level, the originator of the experience takes the receiver's response of 'yes' as confirmation in understanding of the meaning as expressed in the originator's words. Similarly, when talking of a deviant experience, the originator of the experience observes the receiver to be responding with the word 'no'. This is interpreted by the originator as misunderstanding of the meanings expressed in the experience by the receiver. However, on enquiry into the receiver's action of 'no', the originator finds that there is understanding of the words spoken, but that the meaning conveyed by the words evokes a negative feeling, and hence the observed action. In this case, although the originator may expect to hear a 'yes' response to indicate confirmation in understanding of the meaning as expressed in the originators words, the actual observation of a 'no' signifies empathy to the deviant experience.

The purpose of the above illustration demonstrates how phenomena may be interpreted in different ways. In assigning interpretations to observed behaviours it is important to delve beyond the more surface artifacts of action (for example 'yes' and 'no' responses) to elicit the underlying meanings which govern the surface actions (for example, 'no' meaning I understand the meanings of the deviant experience and my action signifies empathy to the phenomenon). As such, the methods employed in this study aim to surface not only words, but also to interpret underlying meanings implied in those words.

THE PREMISE-TO-RECEIVED PRACTICE MODEL

The premise-to-received practice schema described in Chapter one was grounded on thinking about organisations as cognitive maps. The schema was distinguished from cognitive maps in the sense that as opposed to an epistemological structure, the premise-to-received practice is construed as contexts to locate meanings, derived from reflection. The schema takes for granted what organisations say they do as the prerogative of Top Management Teams. What organisations actually accomplish is taken-for-granted as things that Workers do.

Stanfield (1994), in an essay on ethnic models of inquiry, takes up the issue of taken-for-granted assumptions for minority scholars forced to study their own ethnic communities from the Eurocentric perspective. He emphasises the need to study human experiences within their unique cultural contexts rather than employing alien cognitive maps for research design and data interpretation. The premise-to-received practice model is a product of the cultural context under investigation in the sense organisations participating in the study are hierarchical, bureaucratic public sector entities - see section following entitled: Who or what to be studied.

ALIGNMENT METAPHOR FOR UNDERSTANDING INTENTIONS AND ACTIONS

The study investigates the extent to which customer focus intentions diffuse through a group to become shared values and, in terms of patterns of behaviour, deeply ingrained in group members. The notion of 'alignment' can be viewed through a number of lenses. From a strategic theorist view, the notion of alignment equates with "match, congruence or fit" (Hatch, 1997:103). From this perspective, "strategy is concerned with actively managing fit, in order to achieve competitive advantage which will ensure the organisation's survival, profitability and reputation" (Hatch, 1997:103).

The strategic theorists perspective associates match with the notion of intentionality. Intentionality implies causal relationships between intentions and actions which underpin a positivist's worldview. For example, the notion of advantage assumes one organisation to have dominance over another (which may include market share or access to scarce resources), and that this dominance can be measured and controlled. Such assumptions are based on rational thinking. Metaphorically speaking, alignment in the sense of match suggests an objective reality. This creates an image of human nature to be concerned with managing "interdependencies and exchanges across situations" (Smircich, 1983a:340).

An alternative view of alignment is Weick's (1969) notion of "equivocal processing". In Weick's (1969:40) enacted view of organising "the basic raw materials on which organisations operate are informational inputs that are ambiguous, uncertain and equivocal". With each one of the informational inputs there are a number of possibilities or outcomes that might occur. The activities of organising aim to reduce the level of possibilities so as to achieve a degree of certainty. However, information is never received in an unequivocal form. Rather "equivocal information can

become unequivocal only through the processes that first register and then transform this equivocality" (Weick, 1969:41). This view is supported by Ford and Baucus (1987:370) when they suggest:

"Events have no inherent meaning; beyond their occurrence or possible occurrence, they are ambiguous. Events require interpretation regarding their implication to what organisations are doing, want to do, or should do".

As a result, organisations attempt "to transform the equivocal information embedded within inputs into a degree of unequivocality with which it can work and to which it is accustomed" (Weick, 1969:41). This transformation process begins with action. "Once people begin to act, they generate tangible outcomes in some context, and this helps them discover what is occurring, what needs to be explained, and what should be done next" (Weick, 1987:222).

A central premise of Weick's (1969:40) argument is that "it takes equivocality to remove equivocality". In terms of this study, customer focus is an equivocal information input established by Top Management Teams for which a number of possibilities, or sets of outcomes, might occur. Workers are required to scramble the information embedded within customer focus within existing organisational processes. Understanding in customer focus is improved when the equivocality in Workers who practice the phenomenon aligns with the equivocality in the information inputs from Top Management Teams. The alignment with customer focus intentions and actions in this sense requires, initially, the matching of processes to the characteristics of the information inputs.

In the equivocal processing situation discussed above, if the characteristics of the information inputs as enacted by Top Management Teams are not aligned with the processes received in practice, transformation of the equivocal to the unequivocal will not occur. Weick (1969:41) suggests "it is the unwillingness to disrupt order, ironically, that makes it impossible for organisations to create order". Based on Weick's thinking, it is plausible to suggest that unwillingness to meet customer focus in a customer focus way makes it impossible for organisations to be 'truly' customer focused.

Herein lies the interests in organisation structure and process in the sense of how both influence new intentions being brought into existence. A bureaucratic structure is premised on processes which create and sustain order and control. Such systems

can be described as unequivocal. Customer focus requires a different view, in that emphasis is shifted from internal operations to that of meeting and satisfying the needs of customers. Customer focus is an equivocal information input introduced into unequivocal processes. In Weick's view therefore, the likelihood for customer focus intentions to diffuse through a group to become shared and deeply ingrained by group members would be low.

Given this study's assertion of language as representative of peoples' thought patterns in that what people do is related to what they think, so too then the study's discourse must align with the rhetoric. Based on this assertion, the study adopts the more abstract notion of alignment, as opposed to match, in building understanding on the premise-to-received practice relationship.

LANGUAGE AS AN INDICATOR OF THE SOCIAL

Treating organisations as essentially "communicative" (Smircich and Calás, 1987; Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996,) in that "every experience members have involves or is mediated by communication with other members" (Poole and McPhee, 1983:202), a key interaction process is the organisation communication system. Based on Schall's (1983:559) assertion of "social interaction and interpretation as communication activities", so it follows the premise-to-received practice relationship is understandable through the dynamic nature of communicating. This view parallels thinking of Conrad (1983:155) who posits "power as best understood through communicative processes". Accordingly, the study asserts the premise-to-received practice is best understood through the organisation communication system.

Linking of the enacted premise and received practice contexts as relational through the processes of communication is predicated on a particular world view of language. Language conveys different meanings depending upon the lens through which it is viewed. Consistent with mechanistic and organismic images of organisation is the functionalist view of communication as another variable of the organisational "container" (Putnam, 1983b:39). From this frame of reference, organisational communication is the "materialistic substance that travels through computers, memos, telephones and other concrete substances" (Krone, *et al*, 1987:37). Smircich (1983a:347) characterises the thinking on organisations as variables as follows:

- variables are made known through the study of patterns of relationships across and within boundaries;

- the patterns of relationships are thought to be contingent; and
- the issue of causality is of critical importance.

As such, communication is either an objective or objectified element of organisational life, existing in contingent relationships with other organisational variables and which has applicability for managing organisations.

Alternatively, language can be viewed not as a reflection of an objective world but as world constituting (Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996:363). From this perspective, "meaning making is a shared and public activity, not something that occurs in the private recesses of the mind" (Barrett et al, 1995:358). Barrett (et al, 1995:358) view language in the following way:

"A word achieves meaning because of its usage within a systematic pattern of activities, because of its place within a language game members engage in ... Words emerge in order to facilitate and support patterns of interaction ... Words do not merely convey meaning, rather language gains its meaning from its use in action".

Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996:363) support this view by suggesting "language does not describe action but is itself a form of action". In a similar way, Putnam (1983b:51) asserts "language is not simply a system of signs that represent a culture; it is the basis for understanding and bridging experiences, a way of creating social reality".

Thus, the functionalist view of language in terms of "a conduit through which meanings are transmitted" (Barrett, et al, 1995:353, Mumby, 1988:14) excludes the more dynamic features of organising. Rather than view meanings to be attached in the head of the receiver, language is the practice through which meanings are created in and through interaction. Shifting the assumption of organising from a static state requires a corresponding shift in thinking on the locus of meaning making from the individual (intra-subjective) to the relational; between individuals (inter-subjective).

This study adopts Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996), and Putnam's (1983b) constructivist view of language described above, in that it provides a means for analysing different ways of talking about organisational lived experiences. Mumby (1998:10) clearly articulates this view when he states:

"An organisational member does not arrive at a completely subjective, arbitrary interpretation of organisational practices; rather, the process by which an event becomes meaningful is rooted in and framed by inter-subjectively shared patterns of discursive and behavioural practices. Such patterns become inscribed as an organisation's text, ensuring culture's continued reproduction ... A particular organisation may talk about itself using certain metaphors, but at the same time these metaphors serve to produce and reproduce the organisational structure that they describe. Thus symbols [language] both regulate and constitute organisational reality".

Who and what to be studied

The 'what' under investigation is customer focus. The study uses the phenomenon of customer focus as an example of strategy in action for understanding the alignment between what is said is done and what is perceived is done, although other examples might have a similar pattern. The interest with customer focus is twofold.

First, customer focus is conceived as a strategic intervention imposed upon Western Australian State public service agencies from the external environment. Public service agencies, under direction of the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO), are required to adopt a customer focus orientation in the delivery of goods and services. PSMO is a central government agency responsible for the setting of administrative policy and standards for the Western Australian public service.

In Australia there are three levels of government - federal, state and local. Defining boundaries in the context of the Western Australian government is an elusive task. In a recent review undertaken on the Government of Western Australia, (1993a:16) the commissioners pointed out that "although the economic literature has much to say on the topic at a conceptual level, there are no formulae or conventions that determine the size or role of governments in the community". They continued by defining the role of the Western Australian State government in the following subjective way.

"The structure and activities of the State [Western Australian] Government today are a product of our history, including our early years as an isolated settlement with a limited and immature market economy,

of changing community expectations and of the willingness of political groups to respond to community demands."

What can be said about the Western Australian State government is that it comprises "some 300 statutory authorities, departments and agencies with a total workforce of 124,100 in December 1992, representing 23.4% of total employed wage and salary earners in the State" (Government of Western Australia, 1993a:1).

Second, the customer focus strategy represents an espoused change in perspective, that of the post-industrial service organisation. Post-industrial organisations are "characterised by uncertainty, contradiction and paradox, which contrasts sharply with the industrial organisation's stability, routine and tradition." (Hatch, 1997:26).

The 'who' under investigation are agencies' Top Management Teams and Workers, responsible for implementation and performance, of the customer focus strategy respectively.

The study is conceived as an "instrumental case" in Stake's (1998:88) sense that customer focus is of "secondary interest". Customer focus plays a supportive role, facilitating understanding of the relationship between Top Management Team enacted premise and Worker received practice. In other words, customer focus is chosen as the case because it is expected to advance understanding of the relationship between what organisations say they do and what they are perceived to do.

The research strategy is designed to elicit meanings held by individuals towards customer focus from two organisational contexts, the enacted premise and the received practice. The premise context consists of Top Management Teams who hold responsibility for implementation of the customer focus strategy. The received practice context consists of Workers from each of the participating agencies.

The study is designed with the principle of triangulation in mind. The use of multiple sources of data in the sense of a number of Top Management Team and Worker interviews, thickens validity of the research data. In other words, through the use of multiple perceptions, meanings held towards customer focus from the enacted premise and received practice contexts are clarified. In addition, through the technique of constant comparison of data within the two contexts, the study seeks to

develop a rich understanding that encompasses key instances to the phenomenon (Denzin, 1998c).

References to participating agencies are not made explicit in the study. This is to preserve anonymity in the data, and the understanding established between the observer and observed prior to data collection.

Strategies of inquiry to be used

Denzin and Lincoln (1998c:xv) frame the notion of a strategy of inquiry as:

"the skills, assumptions, and practices used by the researcher-as-bricoleur when moving from a paradigm and a research design to the collection of empirical materials. Strategies of inquiry put paradigms of interpretation into motion".

Chapter three on methodology detailed the paradigmatic, ontological and epistemological assumptions guiding the study process. This frames the study at the conceptual. In the language of Guba and Lincoln (1989:44), through a constructivist lens, this study asserts:

"Realities are social constructions of the mind (ontology); what is known is precisely because there is an interaction between observer and observed that literally creates what emerges from the inquiry (epistemology); and as a consequence individuals can come to know things through a hermeneutic/dialectic process that takes full advantage, and account, of the observer/observed interaction to create a constructed reality that is as informed and sophisticated as it can be at a particular point in time (methodology)".

In moving to the operational, Levin (1988:54) informs research design decisions by arguing that "to understand the meaning of a particular social situation, we must both observe and take part. The idea is to put ourselves in a position to construct the meaning of the situation just as the participants do". Janesick (1998) operationalises Levin's (1988) thinking by using the metaphor of dance (which she terms 'the mother of all arts') to explain the process of research design. She conceives the design process as three steps:

- warm-up - design decisions made at the beginning of a study;
- workout - design decisions made throughout the study; and
- cool-down - design decisions made at the end of the study.

While the study is not developed along Janesick's framework, her emphasis on design decisions is relevant. The warm-up stage, which starts with the research question, has been detailed above. The cool-down stage, which is principally concerned with the reduction of data into a manageable model, is detailed in the following sub-section: Methods and tools for collecting and analysing data. The workout stage, which emphasises the conduct of a pilot study, is useful in explaining choices with strategies of inquiry used in the study.

PILOT STUDY

The purpose of the pilot study was to trial different techniques for both data collection and data management for use in the main study. Data collection and management techniques were required, which would provide useful insights into the meanings individuals attribute to the notion of customer focus. The pilot study had both primary and secondary aims.

The primary aims were to evaluate the effectiveness and appropriateness of different:

- i) data collection techniques; and
- ii) data management techniques.

The secondary aims were to:

- i) to facilitate initial "sensitising" (Denzin, 1978:16) towards the notion of customer focus. As Denzin (1978:21) suggests, "the proper use of concepts in research are first sensitised and then operationalised". Sensitising is a technique which allows for learning of the processes representing customer focus and the specific meanings attached to it by respondents in the field. It does not assume a shared "operational definition" (Denzin, 1978:16).
- ii) commence the continuous narrative description process.

Only findings to the primary aims are reported in the study. With regard to the secondary aims, it need only be reported that both were achieved.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

The first primary aim was to identify a technique that provided for the collection of rich data from both the enacted premise and received practice contexts. Three different data collection techniques were trialed with the aim of identifying one method that:

- i) allowed for the collection of lots of ideas as perceived by respondents on the topic of customer focus; and
- ii) generated useful data. Useful data in this context allows for discovery of the "essential qualities" (Miles and Huberman, 1984:215) of customer focus, as opposed to "theory verification and testing" (Glaser and Strauss, 1967:2).

An overview of the three data collection techniques piloted is detailed following. A detailed description of the technique used in the main study is included in this Chapter under the sub-section: Methods and tools for collecting data.

- Focus group interview

The method used in conducting the focus group interview was consistent with the approach initially described by Merton (*et al*, 1956) and as refined by Krueger (1988) and Morgan (1988). The approach entailed asking a series of standard questions relating to five areas of interest, namely: i) participants' thoughts and feelings towards customer focus; ii) perceptions on the government's aim for the customer focus program; iii) perceptions on their agency's customer focus performance; iv) customer focus experiences; and v) communication aspects to customer focus across their agency.

Sub-questions were asked within each key area of questioning for clarification purposes. The interview was recorded for later transcription and analysis.

- Argyris Approach

The Argyris approach was modeled on the Argyris Model II Learning technique (Argyris, 1990 & 1993), informed by the "Values in Action" model of Dick and Dalmau (1990) and the "Organisational Self-Reflection Method" of Finney and Mitroff (1986). The technique aimed at creating data on individuals' reasoning and action. This was achieved through: the application of standard questions, the

answers to which are categorised according to governing values, action strategies and consequences implied; creating an action map (pattern of causality/ causal reasoning); and facilitating feedback sessions which serve as a test of validity.

The Argyris approach supports the paradigmatic assumptions underpinning the focus group interview approach described above. Data were collected and categorised for subsequent analysis. A major difference between the two approaches is that with the Argyris approach, data were categorised according to the framework described in Argyris' (1976) "Theories of Action" learning model. Argyris suggests that although there are an infinite number of espoused theories, individuals' theories-in-use are accounted for by four governing values. These governing values lead to action strategies which encourage advocacy, evaluation and attribution with little, or no inquiry or testing, which ultimately lead to the consequence of defensive reasoning.

In the pilot situation, participants were required to provide written responses to six questions relating to customer focus. The six questions were:

1. Describe what customer focus means to you, its features, its characteristics. Provide examples of what you mean to illustrate your thoughts;
2. Reflect on what you have written for question 1 and write down what you feel actually happens within this organisation;
3. Describe an experience you have had which you consider demonstrated excellent customer focus? Write down what happened, what you did/what the other person did, and how you felt throughout the exchange; that is, feelings as well as thoughts;
4. Reflect on what you have written for question 3 and write down whether you feel this happens within this organisation? Illustrate your thoughts with an example. If what you experience does not relate to what occurs around this agency, write what would happen in its place;
5. Describe an experience you have had which after the event you considered demonstrated poor customer focus? Write down what happened, what you did/ what the other person did, and how you felt throughout the exchange; that is feelings as well as thoughts; and
6. Reflect on what you have written for question 5 and write down whether you feel this happens within this organisation? Illustrate your thoughts with an example. If what you experience does not relate to what occurs around this agency, write what would happen in its place?

- Facilitation

The third technique piloted was termed a 'facilitated approach'. This approach was based on the same paradigmatic assumptions as the other two techniques. The approach was centred on answers generated to two questions:

1. What are the outcomes for government from adopting customer focus?
2. What are the outcomes for you (individually) from adopting customer focus?

The technique followed a standard delivery of: individuals are given three minutes to write responses to the questions in three to five words; participants are then asked to circle what they perceive to be their key point; the circled points are then collected from each individual and listed on a whiteboard; and finally, other points are added to the list if they are perceived as unique.

After forming the two lists, the group was asked to discuss the alignment between the points listed, initially within the lists and then between the two lists. Explanations were sought for any observed inconsistencies, particularly between the lists. The discussion was tape recorded for later transcription and analysis, along with the two lists of responses.

METHOD OF ADMINISTRATION

The pilot study involved participants from an organisation not included in the main study.

The method employed in piloting each data collection technique followed a similar framework. Participants were personally invited to participate in the data collection sessions. Each session was scheduled to last one hour. On arrival, participants were advised of the purpose for the session and provided with a brief overview of the study. Participants were given the opportunity to leave if they do not wish to participate any further.

The piloted technique was then administered.

At the end of the session, feedback was sought from participants on their reaction to the experience. Accordingly, two sets of data were generated. The first set being

respondents' perceptions based on the data collection technique employed. The second being respondents' reactions to the technique *per se*.

Categorisation and analysis of the data was not warranted for the purposes of the pilot study. Respondents' reactions to the three differing approaches were used to assist in the choice of data collection technique for use in the main study.

DATA MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES TRIALED

Three data management techniques were piloted. The first was QSR Nud•ist (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994), a commercially available software tool. The other two techniques were specifically developed for the pilot based on principles of data management defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss and Corbin, (1990), and Huberman and Miles (1998).

Data from the focus group was used in piloting the three data management techniques. An overview of the three data management techniques piloted is detailed following. A detailed description of the technique used in the main study is included in this Chapter under the section: Methods and tools for analysing data.

- QSR Nud•ist

There are a number of qualitative analysis software tools available in managing qualitative data. A discussion of a variety of commercially available tools is found in Miles and Huberman (1984) and Huberman and Miles (1998). Of the commercially available tools, QSR Nud•ist was chosen to pilot.

QSR Nud•ist stands for Non-numerical Unstructured Data Indexing Searching and Theorising. "It is a computer package designed to aid users in handling non-numerical and unstructured data in qualitative analysis by supporting processes of indexing, searching and theorising" (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994:1-1). QSR Nud•ist can be conceptualised as two interlocking sub-systems:

1. a document system - which contains information about every document, whether on-line (where the text to a interview is stored on the QSR Nud•ist database) or off-line (where the text to a interview is not stored on the QSR Nud•ist database); and

2. an index system - which contains the index categories constructed by the user, plus all the information about the categories also developed by the user.

QSR Nud•ist is designed to assist in the creation of theories consistent with interpretive studies. Of particular relevance are the 'memo' and 'note' features which facilitate the development and recording of ideas about data as it is analysed. These features compliment a grounded theory research approach by enabling ideas and theories about the data to be recorded and easily modified throughout the data analysis phase.

Indexing within QSR Nud•ist is undertaken by referencing sampling units (units of data) within data sets (text documents). "Index categories are located at nodes in a linked index system. Nodes are a way of storing ideas and exploring documents, finding material in any combination of categories, expressing questions and the results of searches" (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994:7-1).

The index system may be developed in a 'tree structure' form. Tree structured index systems have a number of advantages. These advantages include "being a powerful way of discovering and expressing relationships between emerging themes; holding categories in sets, making recall and access easy; and helping to clarify the inter-relationships of concepts and themes" (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994:7-1). These features are particularly useful in qualitative research where the aim is to analyse data to identify major themes and categories concerning the phenomenon under investigation.

- Study Designed Technique 1

The learning gained from trialing of QSR Nud•ist led to the design of the first of two study designed data management techniques. Both designs are simple, utilising word processing features within Microsoft Word for Windows, although any word processing software could perform the function. The first study designed management technique operated as follows:

1. Data was initially transcribed and then entered into a table format, one sampling unit per row. A sentence was selected as a sampling unit. Each row was numbered which represented a 'field code'. Four additional columns were then created entitle, 'condition', 'phenomenon', 'action/interaction' and 'consequence'.

2. Each sampling unit was fractured into thought units which were then placed into one of the four columns depending upon the phenomenon to which the data pertained. Each thought unit was coded with its respective 'field code' to enable cross reference to the original transcriptions. As a result, all thought units were words as used by respondents.

3. The third phase involved linking of similar thought units under the one label, termed a category. This was achieved by creating a three column table, using the headings 'category', 'property' and 'dimensions'. A category was therefore developed in terms of its properties and dimensions as informed by the thought units under the broader groupings of 'condition', 'phenomenon', 'action/interaction' and 'consequence'. In the main, thought units were used as category names. Each category was numbered, referred to as a 'reference number'. As a result, numbering was limited to 'field codes' and 'reference numbers'. The product of steps one to three represented the process of open coding as referred to by Glaser and Strauss (1967).

4. Open coding was the first phase in the analysis process. The descriptive phase was accompanied with analysis of what the data pertained to; the process of axial coding. In axial coding, a determination of the type of category was made according to the paradigm model of Glaser and Strauss (1967), Strauss (1987) and Strauss and Corbin (1990). Highly simplified, the coding model systematically related categories on the basis of the following:

(a) Causal Conditions → (b) Phenomenon → (c) Context → (d) Intervening Conditions → (e) Action/Interaction Strategies → (f) Consequences.

Relationships between categories were recorded in the form of a 'memo'. The memo described the relationship between categories and posed questions for further analysis.

- Study Designed Technique 2

The second study designed data management technique operated as follows:

1. Data was initially transcribed and entered into a table format, one sampling unit per row. As in the case of study designed technique 1, a sentence was

selected as a sampling unit. Each row was numbered which represented a 'field code'. One additional column was created entitled, 'analysis'.

2. Each sampling unit was fractured into thought units which were then placed into the analysis column. Each thought unit was coded with the 'field code' number to enable cross reference to the original transcriptions. As a result, all thought units were words as used by the respondents.
3. The third phase involved the linking of similar thought units under the one label, termed a category. This was achieved by cutting the analysis column into a new word document and listing all the thought units in one list. Thought units conveying similar meaning were grouped under the one label. As properties and dimensions emerged, categories were developed in these terms. In the main, it was one of the thought units that was used as the category name. Each category was numbered, referred to as the category 'reference number'. Numbering was limited to 'field codes' and 'reference numbers'. The product of steps one to three represented the process of open coding as referred to by Glaser and Strauss (1967).
4. From the generated list of categories, axial coding was performed by identifying relationships between categories and subcategories. The paradigm model of Glaser and Strauss (1967) was not adhered to as it was the relationships amongst meanings that were sought. Rather than group hierarchically, categories were connected on the basis of their implied meaning. The results to step four were directly recorded in the form of a memo.

RESULTS OF THE PILOT STUDY

- Data Collection Techniques

While all three methods provided insights into how customer focus was interpreted by respondents, the interview approach was considered the most appropriate for use in the main study for the following reasons:

1. In regard to the Argyris approach, respondents felt that they could have provided more description of their customer focus experiences had they been able to verbalise their responses, as opposed to writing their thoughts down.

Respondents felt the writing approach limited the level of detail they could provide.

2. With the facilitated approach, a number of respondents felt that not all their experiences were accounted for in generating the list of ideas on the whiteboard. After completion of the experiences, a number of respondents felt that there were other ideas that could have been listed that did not emerge during the process.
 3. Feedback from the interview approach indicated respondents were happy with the approach, that they felt comfortable with the questions, and that they were able to describe a wide range of experiences in being customer focused. A final question asked during the interview was whether respondents had anything further to add. In all instances, respondents had nothing more to add to what had previously been raised.
- Data Management Techniques

Having trialed three different data management techniques, study designed technique 2 was chosen for use in the main study for the following reasons:

1. QSR Nud•ist has many sophisticated applications applicable to conducting qualitative research. The database is useful to:
 - i) "manage, explore and search the text of documents;
 - ii) manage and explore ideas about the data;
 - iii) link ideas and construct theories about the data;
 - iv) test theories about the data; and
 - v) generate reports including statistical summaries" (Qualitative Solutions and Research, 1994:1-1).

However, a number of limitations to the software were evident. A main limitation was with the recording of coded sampling units. In many instances while undertaking line by line analysis, one line of text needed to be related to the previous or following line. When generating code reports, index references by sampling unit produced lengthy and detailed reports. This was resolved by selecting paragraphs as the sampling unit, however this resulted in many index categories being created for the one sampling unit.

A second limitation arose when moving from the descriptive to the identification of relationships amongst the data. QSR Nud•ist primarily deals with data by forming a hierarchical development of codes, similar to that used in taxonomy. As the study aimed at identifying relationships amongst phenomena, a tool which manages data in the form of relationships, rather than hierarchy, was warranted.

QSR Nud•ist was also restrictive in the way in which results to an analysis were recorded. Although QSR Nud•ist created an index system, data was more easily managed when subjecting new data sets to an existing index system. Recording of sampling units within multiple codes led to the generation of lengthy (and often confused) reports.

2. Study designed technique 1 was effective in fractionalising data and in generating categories which were easily cross referenced to the original data sets. The limitation to the technique rested with the dual process of open coding. The preparation of two tables was time consuming and too descriptive. The aim of open and axial coding was to quickly move from the descriptive to the analytic. The problem was overcome in study designed technique 2, in that the two phases to the process were combined in the one step.
3. The features of study designed technique 2 which led to its selection were as follows.
 - i) Allowed for easy fractionalising and subsequent integration of data; that is, moving from the descriptive to identification of relationships amongst the data.
 - ii) Encouraged management of ideas and categories based on the premise of relationships rather than forcing management of data under a hierarchy structure (as is the case with QSR Nud•ist).

In-depth discussion on the method for analysis of the interview data is detailed in the following sub section:

Methods and tools for collecting and analysing data

The surface application of research design is the methods and tools for collecting and analysing data. These methods and tools are the operationalised elements of the research design paradigm in motion. Denzin and Lincoln (1998b:35) account for operationalising the constructivist position in the following way:

"The constructionist position tells us that the socially situated researcher creates, through interaction, the realities that constitute the places where empirical materials are collected and analysed. In such sites, the interpretive practices of qualitative research are implemented. These practices are methods and techniques for producing empirical materials as well as theoretical interpretations of the world".

Methods and tools for collecting data

Informed by the understanding gained from the pilot study, the data collection methods and tools used in the study are detailed in the following seven sub-sections.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Consistent with hermeneutics and grounded theory, sample selection was purposive in that participants were "chosen who could provide rich descriptions of the experiences under investigation" (Wilson and Hutchinson, 1991:269).

The study was conducted with the approval of the Chief Executive Officer of the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO) (who was also the co-supervisor for the study). A contact officer was nominated within PSMO whose main responsibility was to identify 10 agencies to be invited to participate in the study.

Only one criterion for selection of potential agencies was provided to the PSMO contact officer. The criterion for selection was that agencies were comprised of 40 or more employees. Letters of invitation to participate in the study were forwarded to Chief Executive Officers of the 10 agencies under signature of the Chief Executive Officer of PSMO. A copy of the letter of invitation is included in Appendix 1.

Of 10 offers to participate issued, six were accepted. With each acceptance, an agency contact officer was nominated to assist in participant selection and in scheduling interview dates and times.

INTERVIEW THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTIVIST LENS

Interviewing has a long tradition in both positivist and interpretive research (Morgan, 1988; Denzin, 1978; Fontana and Frey, 1998). "Positivists argue that interviews based upon pre-tested, standardised questions are a way of increasing the reliability of research, interactionism and ethnomethodology bring into question the value of data derived from standardised, survey-research style interviews" (Silverman, 1993:106). The constructivist position argues "interview as a conversation, the art of asking questions and listening. It is not a neutral tool, for the interviewer creates the reality of the interview situation" (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998b:36). Fontana and Frey (1998:47) conceive the interview method through a similar lens when they suggest:

"The interview becomes both the tool and the object, the art of sociological sociability, an encounter in which both parties behave as though they are of equal status for its duration, whether or not this is actually so".

In line with grounded theory methodology, the study employed an interview approach through the constructivist lens.

Interviews were conducted with Top Management Teams for all six agencies in the first instance. Interviews with Worker representatives were conducted after the Top Management Team interviews. Agency contact officers were requested to organise interviews with approximately 10 Workers. In practice, interviews were conducted with between eight to 10 Workers. In total, 55 Worker interviews were conducted across the six agencies.

Two differing interview approaches were decided upon in the collection of data. A focus group approach was used for the collection of data from Top Management Teams, while individual interview was decided upon for Workers.

CHOICE OF INTERVIEW TECHNIQUE

Choice of interview technique for use in gaining insights into the enacted premise and received practice contexts was framed on the following argument posited by

Morgan (1988:20) in response to the question "which method of interview, whether conducted on an individual or group basis, is to be preferred in what circumstances?"

"The answer is anything but clear. If we begin with focus groups, there is an irreducible uncertainty about what the participants might say in private. Yet, if we begin with individual interviews, there is no way to know what individuals might say if others were present. On some topics, groups may inhibit discussion; on others, they may lead to collective flights of fantasy. On some topics, individuals may be more honest with an outside interviewer, and on others, with their peers".

Morgan (1988:25) asserts, "focus group interviews are useful when it comes to investigating *what* individuals think, but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do". In this sense, Morgan views the 'what' people think as meaning attitudes and opinions. The 'why' is concerned with learning about peoples' perspectives, that is, the basis for the particular attitudes and opinions. Byers and Wilcox (1991:72) suggest that for ongoing organisational interventions, focus groups are useful in "identifying both the core values that comprise the 'corporate culture' and the structural barriers that exist which impede their acceptance at all levels of the organisation".

A feature of focus groups is the use of group interaction to produce data and insights that are less accessible without the interaction. Morgan (1988:12) emphasises interaction as one key advantage of the focus group approach. Interaction amongst participants leads to the generation of data with a stronger emphasis on participants' points of view. This is possible, says Morgan (1988:18), as the "focus groups offers a stronger mechanism for placing control over interaction in the hands of participants rather than the researcher".

Notwithstanding, Morgan (1988:22-23) goes on to say:

"There are many instances in which focus groups would not be the preferred method ... If participants are not sufficiently involved in the discussion, the group moderator will have to question them closely to get the desired materials, and individual interview thus might be more appropriate ... A different set of problems may arise if the topic is highly controversial, or if there is a real potential for disagreement among the participants ... If participants do not feel comfortable about revealing their

opinions on a topic in a group setting, then individual interviews may be more effective".

The reason for using focus groups in gaining insights on the enacted premise context through interview with Top Management Teams was based on the assumption that what agencies say they do is a shared, public phenomenon. The potential created by the approach was that placing interaction in the control of participants offered a strong mechanism for understanding the premise context from a shared and public point of view. Individual interview was chosen as the approach for gaining insights on the received practice context with Workers so as to maximise potential for gaining insights on how individuals perceive the phenomenon in practice. A focus group approach may have inhibited individuals from saying what they really think.

CHOICE OF QUESTIONING TECHNIQUE

Although different interview approaches were adopted for collecting data on the enacted premise and received practice contexts, in both instances, an open-ended, in-depth questioning technique was applied. Fontana and Frey (1998:72) suggest an open-ended, in-depth technique is the appropriate choice of questioning when the study's interests is in gaining understanding on the topic under investigation. Silverman (1993) supports this approach by locating the choice of questioning issue in context with the issue of authenticity. In Silverman's (1993:10) view, "where the study aim is to gather an 'authentic' understanding of people's experiences, open ended questions are perceived as the most effective route towards this end".

While open-ended, in-depth questioning was used for both Top Management Team and Worker interviews, the interview schedule for Workers also consisted of a number of structured questions. The structured questions aimed to explore a number of key issues emerging from the Top Management Team interviews. The schedule of questions used in conducting interviews for Top Management Teams are discussed in the sub-section: Characteristics of Focus Group Interviews, and for Workers, in the sub-section: Characteristics of Individual Interviews.

SECONDARY DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUE

A secondary data technique employed was participant observation. While interviewing was the primary data collection tool, by necessity, the technique permitted data collection via participant observation. As Denzin (1978:129)

suggests, "the interviewer is participating in the life experience of a given respondent and is observing that person's report of himself or herself during the interview conversation".

Participant observations were recorded for both Top Management Team and Worker interviews. On completion of interviews, the observations were written up as fields notes.

CHARACTERISTICS OF FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEWS

Characteristics of the Top Management Team focus groups satisfied five criteria as suggested by Krueger (1988) in that the interviews were (i) comprised of people (ii) who possessed certain characteristics, (iii) who provided data (iv) of a qualitative nature (v) in a focused discussion.

Focus group interviews were conducted to satisfy four essential criteria as suggested by Morgan (1988:54): (i) to cover a maximum range of relevant topics; (ii) provide data that is as specific as possible; (iii) foster interaction that explored the participants' feelings in some depth; and (iv) to take into account the personal context that participants used in generating their responses to the topic. Acknowledging the advice of Denzin (1978:120) a fifth criteria was adopted, namely treating the focus group as a conversation.

Interviews followed a standard pattern of delivery as suggested by Krueger (1988:80) namely: (i) a formal welcome and thank you for making the time available; (ii) an overview of the reasons behind the interview and the topic of interest; and (iii) establishing ground rules and gaining respondents' commitment to them (one of which was that the group had responsibility for ensuring they remained focused, not just the researcher). Also included in the ground rules was a commitment from the interviewer that the tape recordings would remain confidential and that anonymity would be preserved in reporting of the research findings.

Interviews were conducted by asking a series of 'standard questions' relating to five areas of interest:

1. Participants' thoughts on customer focus.
2. Customer focus from a government perspective.
3. Participants' perceptions of their agencies customer focus performance.

4. Customer focus experiences.
5. Communicating customer focus across the agency.

A copy of the 'standard questions' asked is included in Appendix 2. In general, questions for each area of interest followed the format of: (i) what are participants' perceptions on the situation asked; (ii) what were the best aspects of the situation; and (iii) what were the worst aspects of the situation. A standard prompt of 'what', 'who', 'why', and 'when' was asked as appropriate to clarify meanings in respondents' responses. Respondents were encouraged to question amongst themselves so as to uncover the way they operationalise what they think.

Each focus group was one hour in duration and was conducted at the respondents' place of work. Interviews were tape recorded for later transcription.

CHARACTERISTICS OF INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

The approach used in conducting individual interviews was consistent with approaches described by Denzin (1978) and Fontana and Frey (1998).

The characteristics, the essential criteria, and pattern of delivery, for the individual interviews were the same as described for the focus group interview above, with the exception that the experience was conducted with one respondent. Noting as Morgan (1988:18) points out "individual interviewing is also interaction".

The difference in the characteristics of the individual interviews conducted with Workers from the focus group interviews conducted with Top Management Teams rested with the 'standard questions' asked. Informed by responses generated from the Top Management Team interviews, Worker interviews were arranged in two parts.

PART 1 - Open ended questions pertaining to customer focus.

Part one questions were aimed at generating data on the meanings held by Workers towards customer focus. Although six questions were asked of Top Management Teams relating to five areas of interest, for the Worker interviews this was reduced to three questions on three areas of interest. The three areas of interest were replicas from the Top Management Team interviews. The three areas chosen provided a means for comparing perceptions and meanings between Top Management Teams and Workers. The three areas of interest were:

1. Participants' thoughts on customer focus.
2. Customer focus from a government perspective.
3. Participants' perceptions of their agencies' customer focus performance.

PART 2 - Structured questions on emergent themes arising from the Top Management Team interviews.

Part two questions were arranged in four sub-sections. The aim of the questions was to clarify with Workers key themes emerging from the Top Management Team interviews. All four sub-sections consisted of placing cards with words or phrases in front of respondents of whom a number of focused questions were asked.

A copy of the 'standard questions' asked is included in Appendix 3. Included in Appendix 3 are layouts of the prompt cards and questions asked for Part 2 questions.

Each interview was 30 minutes in duration and was conducted at the respondent's place of work. Interviews were taped recorded for later transcription.

Methods and tools for analysing data

Informed by the understanding gained from the pilot study, the data analysis methods and tools used for the study are detailed in the following two sub-sections.

ANALYSIS THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTIVIST LENS

The study aimed to generate understanding on the phenomenon of customer focus through collection of Top Management Teams' and Workers' perceptions. Generating data through an interviewing approach was argued above as appropriate

for the study as "this type of observation can be used alone, independent of other procedures to give insights, perceptions and explanations for a given event, which for the case at hand, is more important than actual numbers" (Krueger, 1988:40; Morgan, 1988:25).

Analysis of qualitative interview data is broadly referred to as "content analysis" (Byers and Wilcox, 1991; Berelson, 1956; Krueger, 1988). For qualitative studies, Silverman (1993:10) points out, the aim of content analysis is "to understand the participants' categories". This stands in contrast to the aim of quantitative studies whereby the researcher establishes categories and then counts the number of instances that fall into each category.

Byers and Wilcox (1991), following in the steps of Berelson (1956), coin the term "qualitative content analysis". Qualitative content analysis is distinctly different from content analysis methods used in quantitative studies. With qualitative content analysis "the researcher is not forced to fit utterances into rigid categories; rather categories are formed based on utterances which should yield more germane conclusions" (Byers and Wilcox, 1991:74).

Silverman (1993:59) notes the quantitative basis of content analysis and instead, adopts the term "qualitative textual analysis". As do Smircich and Morgan (1980), Silverman (1993) emphasises that the use of any analytic tool must be consistent with the assumptions regarding the nature of knowledge and the methods by which that knowledge can be obtained. Analysis of the study data aimed to establish the 'realities' the data sets into play from respondents' worlds of lived experiences. This approach opposes the interpretation of data through an imposed version of 'reality' (in other words, the 'reality' of the researcher).

Silverman (1993:76), in a review of his 1982 study on a collection of papers discussing the future of the British Labour Party, illustrates the application of qualitative content analysis techniques (in his terms "qualitative textual analysis") within the interpretive domain. Silverman's analytic approach produced interpretations of respondents' 'realities' by generating categories based on discourse as used by respondents (termed participant categories). By counting the number of utterances within each participant category, Silverman built an interpretive analysis for the study.

Silverman (1993:77) ended his review by posing the question: "Doesn't this method bear a striking resemblance to quantitative content analysis?" Silverman's answer to his own question distinguishes the qualitative content analysis technique from traditional, positivist approaches, as illustrated in the following quotation:

"Now, of course, tabulations I have just presented do share with content analysis one characteristic: both have counting instances of terms used in text. However, unlike naive forms of content analysis, the terms counted are not determined by an arbitrary or common-sense version of what may be interesting to count in a text. It is not coincidental that I have counted agents or 'subjects'. In Western cultures, at least, subjects are intrinsic to narratives: by analysing the construction of subjects, we get to the heart of the work of the text".

Acknowledging the quantitative basis of content analysis, the study adopted the nomenclature "qualitative content analysis". Qualitative content analysis in this sense is aligned with methods referred to in the literature as "discourse analysis" (Gee, *et al*, 1992) and "qualitative textual analysis" (Silverman, 1993). In line with qualitative methods, the study employed qualitative content analysis through the interpretivist lens in analysing data collected through interview.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS

Analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data was undertaken separately. The Top Management Team and Worker data were collectively referred to as 'data groups'.

The taped interviews were initially transcribed, and then verified through play back for accuracy of the original transcriptions. The transcriptions were subjected to analysis based on the grounded theory approach formulated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), informed by techniques of Strauss and Corbin (1990), Krueger (1988), Stewart and Shamdasani (1990), Morgan (1988) and Huberman and Miles (1998). Butterfield (*et al*, 1996:1483) refers to the procedure as 'three phase content analysis'. Three phase content analysis involved a:

- unitising phase - breaking of data into 'thought units';
- categorising phase - organising of thought units into emergent categories; and
- classifying phase - grouping of categories into unifying themes.

As the study's interest is with investigating the alignment between espoused intentions and received practice actions, a fourth phase to the analysis was warranted. This is termed the comparison phase.

All responses generated from the Top Management Team focus groups' interviews were subject to analysis. With the Worker data, only responses to Part A questions were subject to analysis.

Part 2 questions were asked to enable quick analysis of Worker understanding of words or phrases as used by Top Management Teams. Part 2 questions were not put to detailed analysis through the four phase qualitative content analysis process. Rather, responses were considered as an additional source of data for triangulation purposes. Responses were analysed for the purpose of providing thicker description to previously ascertained interpretations.

An overview of the four phase qualitative content analysis process is detailed following.

Phase 1: Unitising

The unitising phase involved two sub steps:

- generating sampling units; and
- generating thought units.

Sub step 1 - Generating Sampling Units

Transcriptions were converted into 'sampling units' based on individual commentaries and coded for reference purposes. In other words, sampling units were delineated on the change in discourse flow between respondents and/or researcher. A code was applied to each unit of information to enable cross reference to the original transcriptions.

Sub step 2 - Generating Thought Units

Sampling units were further broken down or fractionalised into "thought units" (Butterfield *et al*, 1996) or "semantic units" (Stewart and Shamdasani, 1991:109). A

thought or semantic unit was any word, or passage of dialogue, relevant to the topic of customer focus.

In practice, most of the interview data was fractionalised into thought units for further analysis. Numerous authors, including Stewart and Shamdasani (1991) and Krueger (1988), contend it is seldom wise to utilise all of the data generated from focus group interviews. However, based on the assumption of meaning making as occurring in individuals' relatedness with one another, all data was potentially meaningful and was subject to analysis.

No interpretation of the data was made at this stage.

Phase 2: Categorising

The next step in the analysis involved grouping of related thought units. Related thought units were defined on recurrent themes within the data. In other words, categorisation of thought units involved the clustering of similar worded labels under a broader label name, termed a category.

Category labels were, in the main, words as used by respondents in the clustered thought units. Such labels are referred to as "in vivo" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) categories. Where a category title was derived from conceptualising the data by the researcher, the title was referred to as a sociological construct.

A sample of categorised data is detailed in Appendix 4. Appendix 4 lists all thought units from the Worker data grouped under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Phase 3: Classifying

The classification phase of the analysis involved the grouping of categories into unifying themes. Strauss and Corbin (1990) refer to this process as 'axial coding'. Axial coding is performed by looking for relationships amongst the categories established at Step 2. Categories are related by identifying key themes and building these themes in terms of their properties and dimensions. Properties are defined as "attributes or characteristics pertaining to a category", while dimensions are defined as "the location of properties along a continuum" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990:61).

While the study adopted the notion of establishing categories in terms of related properties and dimensions, the strict analytical process of axial coding was not used. Rather than adopt a functionalist view of causality, the study viewed causality through the interpretive lens - see Chapter one. In other words, the study derived meaning from the relationships amongst data, as opposed to causal explanations within the data.

To gain a sense of the data as a whole, a count of instances (thought units) grouped under each category, sub category, property and dimension was made.

The classification phase was conducted informed by Krueger's (1988:120) thinking on five important factors when conducting qualitative analysis.

1. Consider the words (actual words used and their meanings).
2. Consider the context (interpret a comment/word or phrase in light of the 'triggering' stimulus).
3. Consider the inconsistency (look for and explain, changes in respondents positions).
4. Consider the specificity of responses (responses based on experience should be given more weight than those that are vague and impersonal).
5. Find the big ideas (look for the main trends of ideas that cut across the whole data, not only in the responses but throughout the interaction).

Relationships amongst categories were recorded in the form of a memo. Memos recorded during analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data were kept separate. A sample of memos made during analysis of the data is included in Appendix 5. Appendix 5 lists memos 9 to 42 which were made during analysis of the Worker data.

Phase 4: Comparison

The final step in the analysis was to establish the alignment between the enacted premise and received practice meaning contexts. This was performed by comparing the major themes emerged across both data groups. In overarching terms, phase four aligned the 'realities' set into play from analysis of the internal realities interpreted from the Top Management Team and Worker data. In this way, the analysis firstly 'interpreted' the two worlds of realities from the lived experiences of Top

Management Teams and Workers, and secondly, 'aligned' the realities as informed by the data.

Illustration of qualitative content analysis in practice

Having detailed the four phase qualitative content analysis process used, the discussion now provides an illustration of the process as used in practice.

The Top Management Team data were analysed first.

Analysis commenced with a word by word analysis of the first transcript. The purpose for doing so was to sensitise the analysis to the meanings implied in the words as used by respondents (Strauss and Corbin, 1990: 83). A single word, in this context, was referred to as a thought unit.

Analysis proceeds by linking thought units (or in other words, words) that conveyed similar meanings. For illustrative purposes, analysis of data, in response to the question: 'What does customer focus mean to you?', proceeded as follows.

Four indicative sampling units in response to the question were:

- *Providing the best possible service;*
- *Delivering a good, effective service;*
- *Matching what is produced with what is required by the client; and*
- *Providing a service the customer wants;*

The sampling units were fractionalised and coded into thought units as follows:

- *providing (2), best (1), possible (1), service (3), delivering (1) and so on.*

In practice, after coding two paragraphs of data, many thought units emerged. Immediately the researcher was faced with having to cluster thought units conveying similar meaning. In other words, grouping of thought units pertaining to the same phenomenon. The broader groupings were termed categories.

Continuing with the example introduced above, the following groupings of thought units (categories) were made:

- *Delivering **with** providing.*
- *Customer **with** client.*
- *Best possible service **with** effective service.*
- *Wants **with** what is required **with** need.*

Analysis proceeded in this manner until, after analysing two pages of data, many categories emerged. In order for the data to remain meaningful, the clustered thought units, themselves needed to be clustered.

Clustered thought units, although conceptually distinct, were grouped on the basis that they pertained to the same phenomenon. In some instances, the same categories appeared to pertain to more than one phenomenon. Such categories were not conceptually distinct, rather were labels conveying meaning of attributes or characteristics pertaining to a category (properties of a category), or meaning of locations of properties along a continuum (dimensions of a category). Accordingly, a number of properties and dimensions related to more than one category.

Continuing with the above example, the following linkages were made:

- *delivering/ providing **with** customer/ client **with** best possible service/ effective service.*

These clustered thought units were grouped under the label 'providing the best possible service'.

- *delivering/ providing **with** customer/ client **with** best possible service/ effective service **with** customer/ client **with** wants/ what is required.*

These clustered thought units were grouped under the label 'providing a service the client requires'.

As a result, two broader categories were formed. Both categories pertained to 'providing a service', however only one related to the phenomenon of 'what a client requires'.

In some instances, sociological constructs (category titles using the words of the researcher), as opposed to in-vivo constructs, were warranted. Sociological constructs were developed in those instances where it was practical to do so. For

illustrative purposes, consider the sociological construct 'service types'. This category contained many thought units, including:

- *inquiries, handing out information, security, education* and so on.

'Service types' as a category in its own right was also a property pertaining to the categories:

- 'providing a service'; and
- 'providing a service the client requires'.

Dimensions to the category 'service types' include:

- 'advanced services'; and
- 'basic services'.

These in-vivo categories were words found in the data.

Another sociological construct was the category 'client types'. This category contained many thought units, including:

- *the public, the state of Western Australia, customers, clients, internals, externals.*

In this case, the category 'client types' was also a property for the category:

- providing a service the client requires.

Coding at this stage was not concerned with analysing either 'what is a customer' or 'what is a service'. Rather, the aim was to fractionalise the data into thought units and to identify relationships amongst categories. Tentative relationships identified in the data were recorded in the form of a memo. Memos detailed thoughts of the analyst while proceeding with analysis of the data. The purpose of a memo was to preserve the thoughts of the analyst as they emerged. The main focus of coding was in fractionalising and clustering data into thought units which conveyed similar meaning.

Analysis proceeded in the above manner to ensure thick description of categories. For example, thought units placed under the category of 'providing a service' included:

- *providing the best possible service/ best information, most accurate information/ providing a good, effective service/ providing a efficient, satisfactory, timely, accurate service.*

Thought units which referred to customers but which do not pertain to a customer need or want, were also grouped under the 'providing a service' category, including:

- *what we give the public/ offering a service to the public/ giving customers a good experience/ public service - a service to the public.*

Thought units placed under the category 'providing a service the client requires' included:

- *servicing a need/ matching what is produced with what is required/ delivering a service that the public expects and wants/ constructing services to suit customer needs/ focusing your needs towards what customers require/ meeting the expectations of customers/ only provide services that customers come and see/ taking some consideration of the needs of clients/ making the needs come first/ the needs are paramount/ meeting customer needs/ supplying a service that is needed/ delivering what the customer wants and needs/ aligning the organisational objectives, outputs to customer needs/ identifying who the customers are and their needs, and aligning our outputs to that/ customers getting a high amount of what they ask for/ meeting the needs of the customer/ focusing on what needs to be delivered/ presenting to customers what they are asking for.*

The thought unit '*focus your needs towards what the customer requires*' was included within the category 'providing a service the client requires' as the label '*focusing your needs*' implied a service. The thought unit '*focusing your needs*' as a service could have been placed under either category. However, as this thought unit was associated with the thought unit '*what the customer requires*', the phrase could only be placed within the 'providing a service the client requires' category.

The issue was not in defending either statement as being conceptually distinct at this stage. In time, it may be found that the two categories could be grouped together. However, at this stage of the analysis, the two categories were kept separate.

The method of coding described above was strictly adhered to in coding all transcripts. The difference in coding between the first and last Top Management Team interview was that the first interview commenced with word by word analysis, while in the last interview, once the linking of individual words was found to be trustworthy, phrases or words conveying similar meaning were grouped under the one category.

Thought units also emerged with explicit meaning pertaining to positive and negative evaluations of existing categories. These were labelled evaluative categories and were grouped under existing categories as sub-categories under the label of either:

- 'pos. practice' - to denote a positive evaluation; or
- 'neg. practice' - to denote a negative evaluation.

Evaluative categories served two purposes. First, they provided insights into 'what' respondents were saying. Second, they provided more meaningful insights into 'why' respondents were saying the things that they did.

Evaluative categories included single word thought units, for example 'yes' and 'no' responses. In this way, the single word sub categories remained meaningful, however this was only in context with the relevant category.

The coding of evaluative thought units is illustrated with the use of the following quotation:

Yes, we do provide a fast efficient service, but I don't think we are providing a service the client requires.

The data was fractionalised as follows. *Yes* was placed under the sub category 'pos. practice - yes', under the category 'providing a service'. *I don't think we are* was placed under the sub category 'neg. practice - don't think so' under the category 'providing a service the client requires'. The term *we* conveyed specific meaning. In this context, *we* emerged as pertaining to the organisation as a whole. In other words, the sampling unit, *I don't think we are providing a service the client requires*,

is one respondent's perception of the organisation's performance, as opposed to a perception of self, fellow Workers', or Top Management Team's, performance.

After completing analysis of the Top Management Team data (including memo writing) analysis of the Worker data was commenced.

Analysis of the Worker data proceeded with the benefit of learning gained from analysis of the Top Management Team data.

Similar groupings of words and phrases emerged from the Worker data as for the Top Management Team data. Although this was the case, at no time were Worker categories pushed to conform to categories emerging from the Top Management Team data.

Results of data analysis are detailed in Chapter five: Findings.

Ethical issues

The study involved the collection of data in the form of Top Management Team and Worker perceptions across a number of Public Sector organisations. Interview data may be conceived as invasive. Issues of concern for participants included how the data was to be used and confidentiality of the information. At the beginning of each interview, participants were advised that the purpose of the study was to identify major themes surrounding the phenomenon of customer focus. Reporting of the major themes was to be done in such a way as to maintain the anonymity of the source.

In complying with Curtin University's code of ethical practice of research, all transcriptions of interviews are to be kept secure for a period of five years. The study was conducted in accordance with the University's "Code of Conduct" in the publication "Curtin University of Technology: Handbook of guidelines and regulations for degrees by research" (1994).

Summary

The design for the study was ordered on Denzin and Lincoln's (1998) model for structuring research design. The design emphasised an interpretive approach aimed at eliciting data from individual points of view within the work setting. A sample of six organisations was selected, on which sixty-one interviews were conducted. Six

focus interviews were conducted with organisations' Top Management Teams responsible for implementation of the customer focus strategy. Fifty-five individual interviews were conducted with organisations' Workers. The depth of interviews was selected for triangulation purposes.

The study design was initiated with a pilot study in which three data collection techniques (focus interview; Argyris approach; and facilitation) and three data management techniques (QSR Nud•ist and two study designed data management techniques) were trialed. Interview was chosen for data collection purposes as it provided in-depth collection of respondents' thoughts on customer focus. A study designed data management technique was chosen as it allowed for easy fractionalising and subsequent integration of data. The technique encouraged management of ideas and categories based on relationships amongst emergent themes.

The qualitative approach described in this Chapter generated masses of narrative data and field note observations. Analysis of the data is reported in Chapter five and discussed in Chapter six.

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS

Introduction

Chapters three and four detailed the paradigmatic frame and research design in collecting data from which to investigate the premise-to-received practice relationship. The qualitative methods employed generated masses of narrative data and field note observations. The narrative data was used to identify respondents' "first order constructs" (Schutz, 1962) on the meanings held towards customer focus. "Second order constructs" (Schutz, 1962) were developed on the relationships amongst the dominant themes emerging from the first order constructs. Field observations were used as secondary data to confirm/refute relationships in the development of the first and second order constructs.

This Chapter details descriptions of both the first and second order constructs derived from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data. First order constructs emerged from the categorisation phase (phase two) of the four phase "qualitative content analysis" (Byers and Wilcox, 1991) procedure described in Chapter four. Second order constructs emerged from the classifying phase (phase three) of the qualitative content analysis procedure.

Emphasis for data analysis was premised on "thick description" (Geertz, 1973). Thick descriptions of categories grounded from the data are detailed in the Appendices. References to Appendices are indicated in the reporting of findings in this Chapter.

The framework for detailing the study's findings is depicted in Table 5.1.

TABLE 5.1: Framework for Reporting of the Study Findings

Chapter section	Section content	Supplementary content
Findings from analysis of Top Management Team data at the 'categorisation' phase	Overviews emergent categories and sub categories	Thick descriptions of each category and sub category reported in Appendix 6
Findings from analysis of Top Management Team data at the 'classification' phase	Groups data on the basis of themes identified at the categorisation phase	
Findings from analysis of Worker data at the 'categorisation' phase	Overviews emergent categories and sub categories	Thick descriptions of each category and sub category reported in Appendix 7
Findings from analysis of Worker data at the 'classification' phase	Groups data on the basis of themes identified at the categorisation phase	

Conventions used in reporting of findings

Conventions used in reporting of the study's findings are as follows:

- Bold type indicates category names.
- Italic type indicates sub category, property, and dimension, names.
- Words/phrases in single quotes indicate theme titles.
- Words/phrases in 10-point type indicate direct quotes from the data.
- Words in [] indicate author additions.

Findings from analysis of Top Management Team data at the 'categorisation' phase

This Chapter section overviews emergent categories and sub categories derived from analysis of the Top Management Team data. Thick descriptions of individual categories and sub categories are detailed in Appendix 6.

The questions driving the interviews were concerned with understanding what Top Management Teams think about, and mean by, customer focus.

Nine major categories emerged from analysis of the Top Management Team data. Categories varied in the degree of support and representation throughout the data. Each category was comprised of a number of sub categories. A summary of the nine major categories and sub categories from analysis of the Top Management Team data is detailed in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2: Summary of Categories and Sub Categories for the Top Management Team Data

No	Category	Sub category
1	Structure of customer focus	<i>Servicing</i>
		<i>Service types</i>
		<i>Standards/performance indicators</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/methods</i>
		<i>End result/outcomes</i>
		<i>Assessment of performance</i>
2	Attitudes towards customers	<i>Customer awareness</i>
		<i>Committing to change</i>
		<i>Involvement</i>
		<i>Mindsets/attitudes</i>
3	Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	<i>Customer awareness</i>
		<i>Involvement</i>
		<i>Relationships</i>
4	Our understanding of ourselves as providers	<i>Purpose/role</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/ methods</i>
		<i>Change</i>
5	Elements which need to be balanced	<i>Resources and role</i>
		<i>Words and actions</i>
6	Perceptions of customer focus	<i>Government customer focus program</i>
		<i>PSMO/Government/Minister</i>
		<i>Other agencies</i>
7	Customer factors impacting on customer focus	<i>Customer types</i>
		<i>Servicing relationship</i>
		<i>Customer behaviours/ abilities</i>
		<i>Perceived customer status</i>
		<i>Service context/location</i>
		<i>Government factors</i>
8	Finding out about customers	<i>Communication/building relationships</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/methods</i>
		<i>Mindset/attitude</i>
9	Organisational factors impacting on customer focus	<i>Resources and capacity</i>
		<i>Volunteers and guides</i>
		<i>Management culture and role</i>
		<i>Relationships</i>
		<i>Involvement and commitment</i>
		<i>Staff/comportment of our people</i>
		<i>Structure</i>

An overview of the categories based on the level of support and representation across the data follows.

Category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, and category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, were the most represented across the six data sets.

Our understanding of ourselves as providers was the most robust of the nine categories. The category was strongly supported and well represented. The data strongly suggested customer focus was cognate with both knowledge and understanding of the organisation's *purpose and role*, and *processes/systems/methods* of service delivery. The sub category *change* was associated with customer focus in three contexts: a *change* in the way organisational activities are performed; a *change* in Worker mindsets; and a *change* in customer perceptions. Numerous properties and dimensions emerged for the **our understanding of ourselves as providers** category, which suggested this phenomenon was strongly associated with customer focus.

Attitudes towards customers was also strongly supported throughout the Top Management Team data. It was strongly represented across all data sets. **Attitudes towards customers** was strongly represented in terms of *mindsets/attitudes*, *customers awareness* and *committing to change*. The *mindsets/attitudes* sub category suggested that differences in service delivery approaches were related to differing frames of reference. These were expressed in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* labelled as *bureaucratic*, *conservative*, *scientific* and *the attitude thing*. *Customer awareness* grouped responses pertaining to *knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are*, *understanding your customer* and to a lesser extent, *thinking from the customer perspective*. *Committing to change*, as indicated by the data, was strongly represented in terms of *carrying the thinking out*. In other words, doing customer focus required individuals to *carry the thinking out*. A mindset/attitude type labelled the *attitude thing* defined the type of thinking in this context. Finally, **attitudes towards customers** were to a lesser extent supported in terms of *involvement*. *Involvement* emerged under labels of *consultation*, *relationships* and *communication* with customers.

Category 1, **structure of customer focus**, was also strongly represented across the data but to a lesser extent than categories 4 and 2. This category suggested customer focus was associated with *servicing*, *service types*, *standards and performance indicators*, *processes/systems/methods*, *end results/outcomes*, and an *assessment of performance*. Of the six sub categories, *processes/systems/methods* was the most represented. This suggested Top Management Teams think about customer focus mainly in terms of *processes/systems/methods*.

Category 9, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**, was well represented across all data sets, however to a lesser extent than category 1. The category was represented by the largest number of sub categories. The data indicated there were numerous *organisational factors which impact on customer focus*. These factors were grouped under the labels of *resources and capacity, volunteers and guides, management culture and role, relationships, involvement and commitment, staff/comportment of our people* and *structure*. Organisational factors were supported to varying degrees across the data. *Resources and capacity* emerged as a strongly supported factor, represented across all data sets. *Volunteers and guides* was also strongly supported, however was represented across only two of the six data sets. *Structure* emerged as the weakest factor, yet was represented across four data sets. The numerous properties and dimensions to the sub categories indicated a depth of *organisational factors* associated with customer focus.

Of the remainder, category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, and category 6, **perceptions of customer focus**, emerged as the most supported. Both categories were well represented across all data sets.

Within the **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** category, *customer awareness* emerged as the most supported sub category. *Customer awareness* grouped responses pertaining to what Top Management Teams perceived customer perceptions to be of themselves. Top Management Team thoughts on customers' perceptions of themselves emerged as pertaining to three phenomena, *expectations and understanding towards what the organisation exists for, knowledge of what services the organisations deliver, and seeing things happen*. **Customer understanding of ourselves as providers** also emerged in terms of *involvement* and *relationships*. *Involvement* and *relationships* were represented across the data to a lesser extent than the *customer awareness* sub category.

Perceptions of customer focus emerged as an important phenomenon associated with customer focus. Top Management Teams' **perceptions of customer focus** were grouped under the labels, *government customer focus program, PSMO/government/minister* and *other agencies*. The strong representation of thoughts on both the *governments customer focus program* and on customer focus demonstrated by *PSMO/government/minister* suggested these two phenomena as foremost in respondents' minds when thinking about customer focus. Perceptions on customer focus demonstrated by *other agencies* emerged as a lesser influence on respondents' thinking about customer focus.

Category 8, **finding out about customers**, emerged as an important category, represented across all data sets. The category was comprised of the sub categories *processes/systems/methods*, *communication and building relationships*, and *mindsets/attitudes*. *Processes/systems/methods* was the most supported sub category of the **finding out about customers** category. The sub category pertained principally to issues of evaluation and measurement. *Communication and building relationships* emerged to a lesser extent as elements in **finding out about customers**. *Mindsets/attitudes*, as in the sub category of the same name in category 2, was only weakly supported in this category. The *mindset/attitude* was expressed in terms of a *culture of measuring*.

Category 7, **customer factors impacting on customer focus**, was represented across the data to a similar extent as category 8. However, unlike category 8, which was comprised of three sub categories, **customer factors impacting on customer focus**, was comprised of six sub categories. In other words, the category was comprised of a number of minimally supported sub categories. Properties and dimensions of the sub categories were numerous, reflecting a diversity in perceptions of **customer factors impacting on customer focus**.

Elements which need to be balanced was the least supported category. *Resources and role* emerged as the most represented sub category. The data suggested customer focused organisations were required to balance *resources* against the organisations' *role*. *Words and actions* was weakly supported, represented across three of the six data sets.

Findings from analysis of Top Management Team data at the 'classification' phase

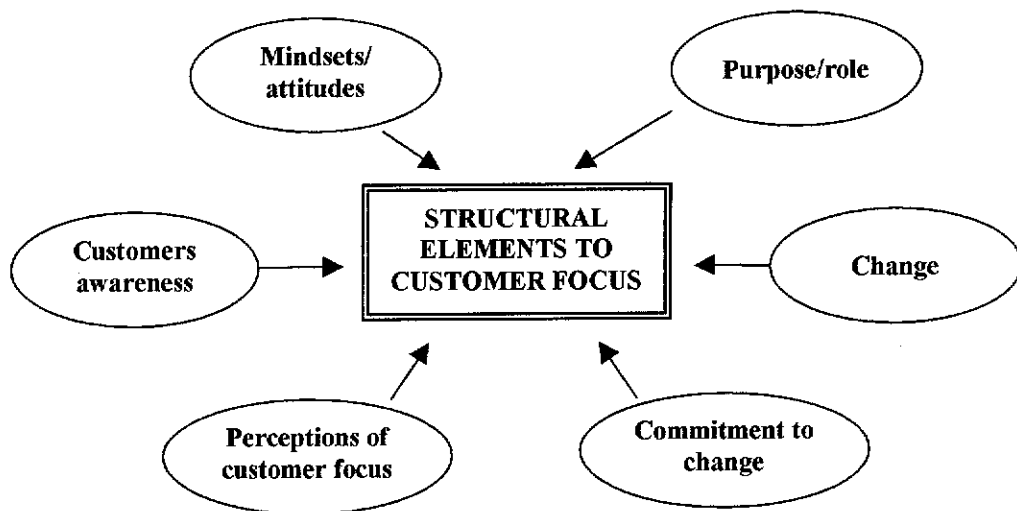
This Chapter section groups data on the basis of themes identified at the categorisation phase of the three phase qualitative content analysis.

Organising the data on the basis of themes identified at the categorisation phase emerged a clearer picture of the meanings held by Top Management Teams towards customer focus. The data demonstrably supported the notion of customer focus as pertaining to two dominant phenomena:

- *mindsets/attitudes*;
and
- *servicing*.

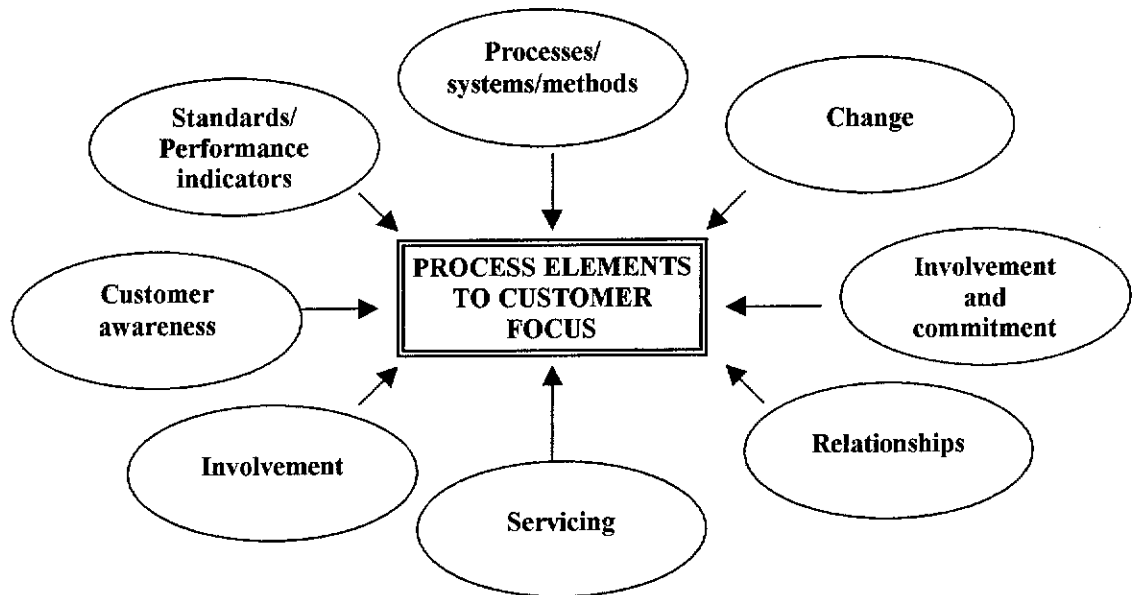
The *mindsets/attitudes* phenomenon related to structural aspects of customer focus. Structure of customer focus was associated with responses pertaining to 'what we do'. Sub categories grounding the notion of customer focus in a structural sense are detailed in Map 5.1.

MAP 5.1: Top Management Team Sub Categories Grounding Customer Focus in a Structural Sense



The *servicing* phenomenon related to processual aspects of customer focus. Process of customer focus was associated with responses pertaining to 'how we do it'. Sub categories grounding the notion of customer focus in a process sense are detailed in Map 5.2.

MAP 5.2: Top Management Team Sub Categories Grounding Customer Focus in a Process Sense



Top Management Team perceptions on structure and process conveyed a sense of what respondents say they think - the enacted premise context. Both the structural and processual aspects of customer focus emerged as strongly relational. In other words, the themes of structure and process emerging from Top Management Teams' responses about customer focus existed in a strong relationship. The merging of structure and process enabled analysis of the way Top Management Teams operationalise what they think - the practiced context. In other words, the interaction of structure and process *is* organising in practice from Top Management Teams' points of view.

Findings at the classifying phases are presented in two parts. First, analyses of the structure and process themes are detailed. The classified data as themes is the Top Management Teams' customer focus enacted premise. This is followed with an analysis of the interaction of the two themes as supported by the data. The interaction of the classified data *is* the constructed Top Management Team customer focus practice.

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR THEMES

Responses grouped under each category emerged as pertaining to major phenomena and dominant themes. Dominant themes conveyed sentiments that Top Management

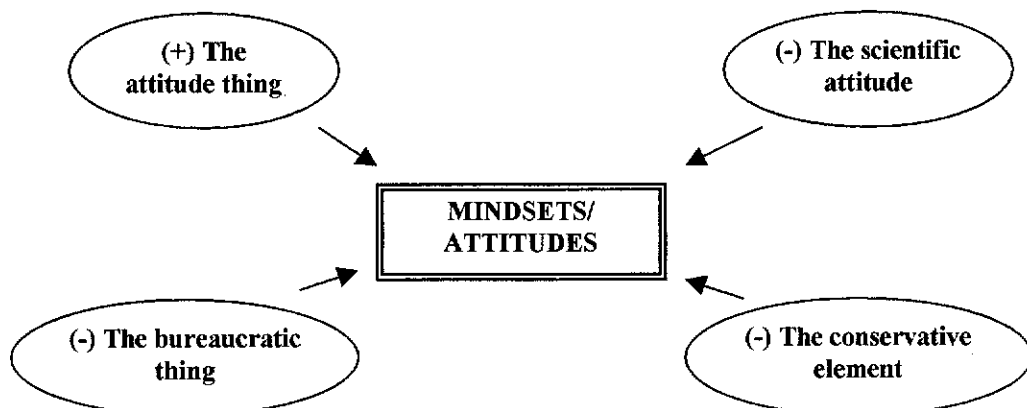
Teams hold towards the customer focus phenomenon. Analysis of major phenomena, dominant themes and sentiments conveyed by the themes, for each category is presented following.

1. STRUCTURE OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

The meaning of customer focus in a structural sense translated in the language in-use of Top Management Teams as types of *mindsets/attitudes*. Evidence for customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to types of *mindsets/attitudes* was strongly supported across the data as described previously at the categorisation phase of the analysis.

Structural elements of customer focus in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* were most strongly and explicitly represented under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, under the sub category of the same name. Top Management Teams talk of *mindsets/attitudes* was categorised under themes labelled 'positive' and 'negative'. *Mindsets/attitudes* categorised under the 'positive' theme were represented by one property, *the attitude thing*. *Mindsets/attitudes* categorised under the 'negative' theme were represented by the properties *the bureaucratic thing*, *the conservative element* and *the scientific attitude*. Properties of the *mindsets/attitudes* sub category are detailed in Map 5.3. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designed as (+) for positive and (-) for negative.

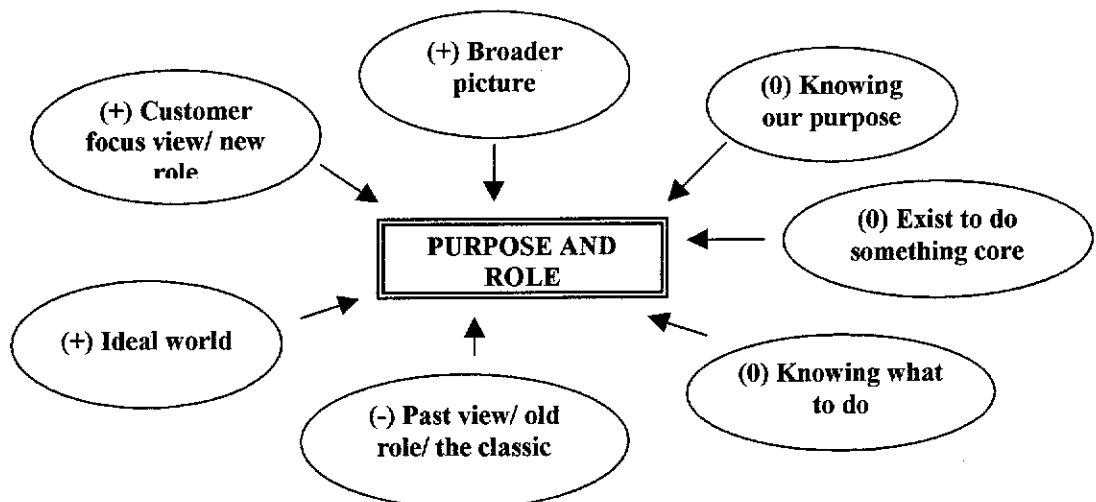
MAP 5.3: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Mindset/Attitudes



Strongly related to a structural sense of customer focus as pertaining to 'positive' and 'negative' themes of *mindsets/attitudes* were Top Management Teams' responses

concerning *purpose and role* grouped under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. *Purpose and role* emerged as pertaining to three themes, labelled 'general', 'old' and 'new'. The general theme was conveyed by responses grouped under the properties *knowing what to do/the fundamentals*, *knowing our purpose* and *exist to do something core*. The 'old' theme was conveyed by responses grouped under the property *past view/old role/the classic*. The 'new' theme was conveyed by responses grouped under the properties *customer focus view/new role*, *broader picture* and *ideal world*. Properties of the *purpose and role* sub category are detailed in Map 5.4. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designated as (+) for the 'new', (-) for the 'old' and (0) for general statements.

MAP 5.4: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Purpose and Role



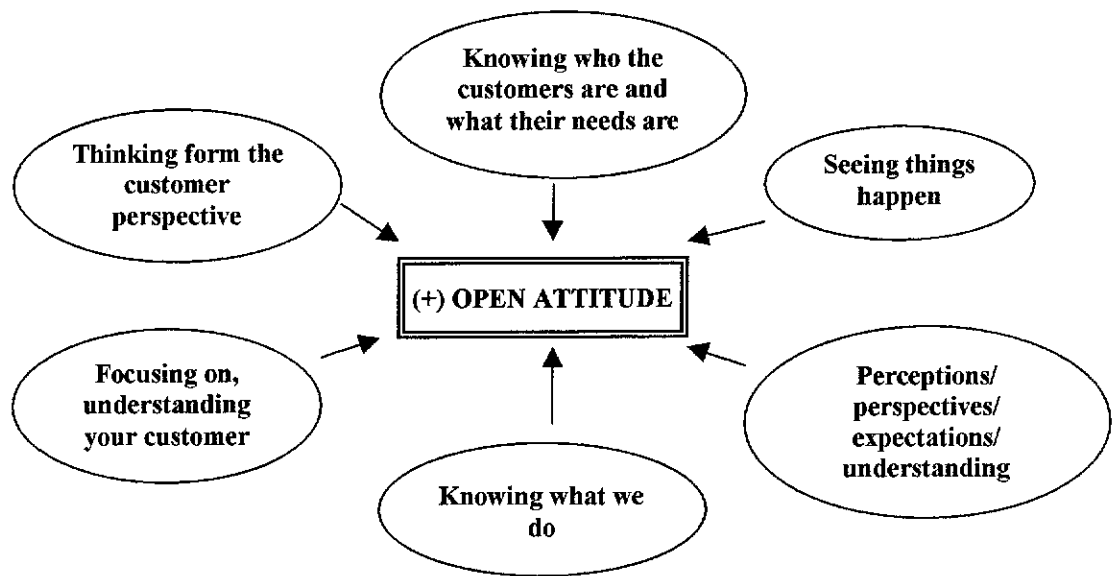
The relationship that emerged was an association between the 'positive' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'new' theme of *purpose and role*. In other words, 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* were associated with *purpose and role* in a 'new' sense. Similarly, a strong relationship emerged between the 'negative' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'old' theme of *purpose and role*.

Top Management Teams talk of customer focus in a structural sense pertained to either:

- 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* which related to an 'old' view of *purpose and role*;
- or
- 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* which related to a 'new' view of *purpose and role*.

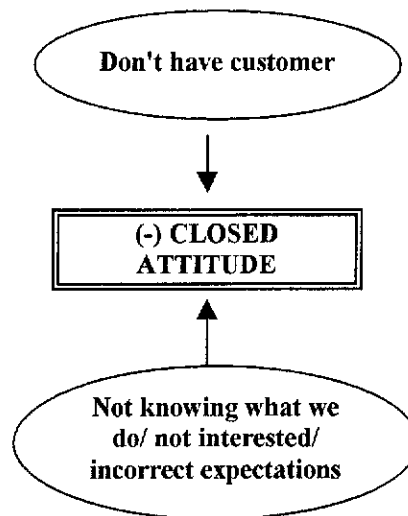
Responses of Top Management Teams across the two *customer awareness* sub categories were linked as follows. The properties *perceptions/perspectives/expectations/understanding, knowing what we do, and seeing things happening* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, emerged as being strongly related with properties grouped under the 'open attitude' theme under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the 'open attitude' theme are detailed in Map 5.5.

MAP 5.5: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the 'Open Attitude' Theme



The property *not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, emerged as being strongly related with the property grouped under the 'closed attitude' theme under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the 'closed attitude' theme are detailed in Map 5.6.

MAP 5.6: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the 'Closed Attitude' Theme



Building upon the picture of customer focus in a structural sense described above, was a strong relationship between *mindsets/attitudes* and *customer awareness*. Top Management Team talk of customer focus is further grounded as pertaining to two types of attitudes:

- The relationship between the 'positive' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'new' theme of *purpose and role* was embodied under an 'open attitude' theme of *customer awareness*.
- The relationship between the 'negative' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'old' theme of *purpose and role* was embodied under a 'closed attitude' theme of *customer awareness*. The 'closed attitude' of *customer awareness* in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers** was strongly associated with negative perceptions of customers from a perceived **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** perspective.

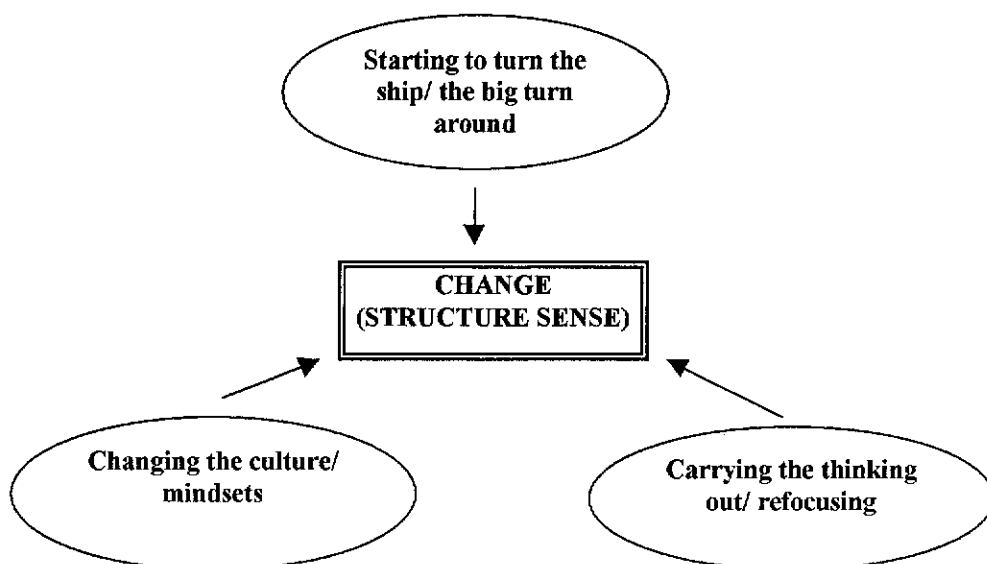
Strengthening the argument for customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were responses grouped under the label of *change*. *Change* was associated with customer focus in both a structure and process sense. It is the former association that is of interest to the current discussion.

Change emerged as a sub category labelled *commitment to change* under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and as a sub category labelled *change* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Change in a structural sense of *mindsets/attitudes* was strongly represented under category 4 in the property *changing the culture/mindset* and under category 2 in the property *carrying the thinking out/refocusing*. In the former, Top Management Team responses specifically associated customer focus with a *change* in *mindsets/attitudes* from a 'negative' to 'positive' theme as described above. In other words, changing from *the bureaucratic thing, the conservative element or the scientific attitude, to the attitude thing*. In the latter, Top Management Teams were saying that in order to be customer focused, Workers needed to be *carrying the thinking out*. Thinking in this context referred to the 'open attitude' theme of *customer awareness*, described above.

A further property of the *change* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, linked the phenomenon of customer focus with *mindsets/attitudes* in terms of *starting to turn the ship/the big turn around*. *Change* in this context referred to a shift in *mindsets/attitudes* from the 'old' theme of *purpose and role* to the 'new' theme. This emergent finding reinforced the link between *purpose and role* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, and the 'positive/negative' themes of *mindsets/attitudes* under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the notion of *change* in a structure sense are detailed in Map 5.7.

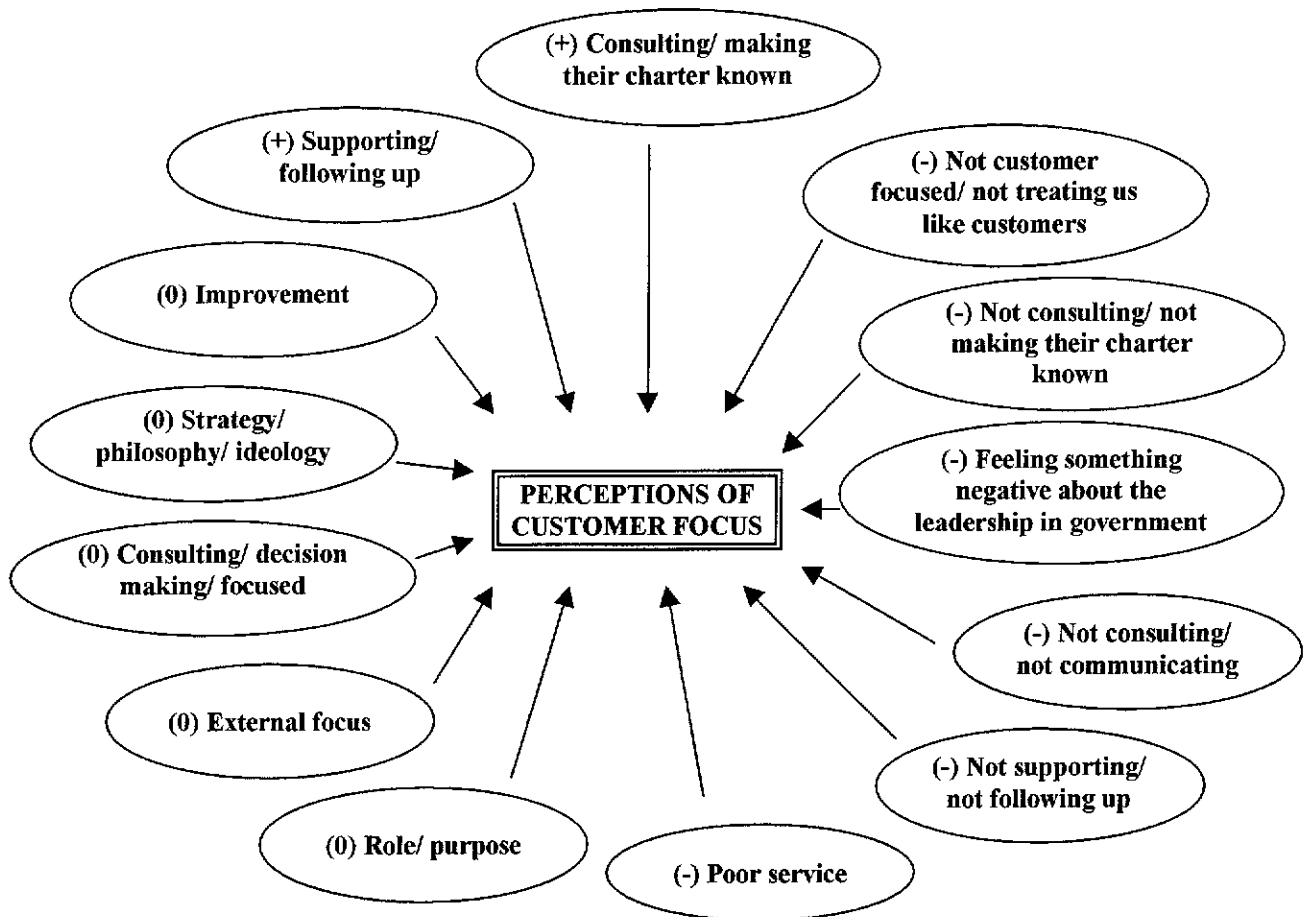
MAP 5.7: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Change in a Structural Sense



Reinforcing the notion of customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were Top Management Team responses on the phenomenon of *change*. While the data associated *change* with both structure and process, in the former context, there was well grounded support suggesting customer focus required a *change* in Worker *mindsets/attitudes*. *Change*, as indicated by the data, linked the notion of *mindsets/attitudes* with both *purpose and role* and *customer awareness*.

Further evidence supporting a structural sense to customer focus in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* were responses grouped under category 6, **perceptions of customer focus**. Category 6 was comprised of responses that shed light on respondents' experiences with customer focus. The category label itself, **perceptions of customer focus**, conveyed a sense of *mindsets/attitudes* to the extent that perceptions were inextricably linked with mental models. Properties grounding the **perceptions of customer focus** category are detailed in Map 5.8. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designed as (+) for positive, (-) for negative and (0) for no evaluation.

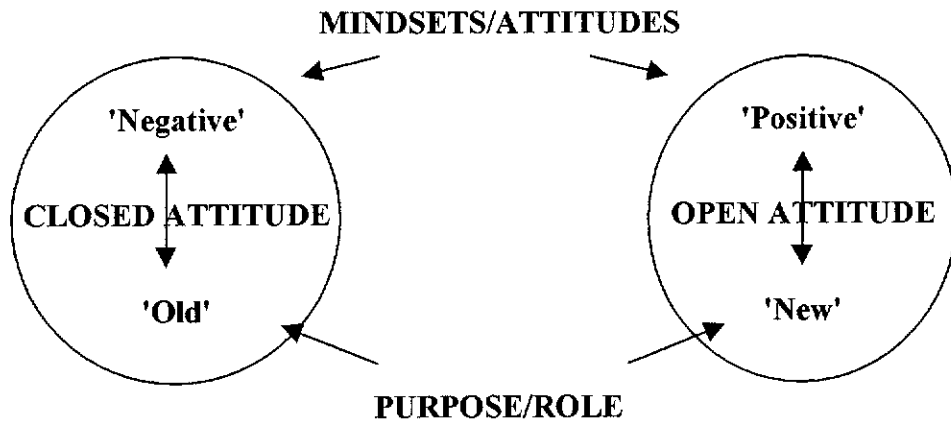
MAP 5.8: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Perceptions of Customer Focus Category



Top Management Team experiences with customer focus emerged from the data as mainly pertaining to the *government customer focus program* and *PSMO/government/Minister*. Although only minimally supported across the data, responses grouped under category 6 suggested **perceptions of customer focus** to be more of a negative type. In other words, respondents experiences with the *government customer focus program* and with *PSMO/government/Minister* were in the main more negative than positive. This suggested that Top Management Teams' *mindsets/attitudes* towards customer focus were informed by more negative experiences.

The relationships amongst the emergent themes for customer focus in a structural sense are depicted in Figure 5.1.

FIGURE 5.1: Meaning of Customer Focus in a Structural Sense as Talked About by Top Management Teams

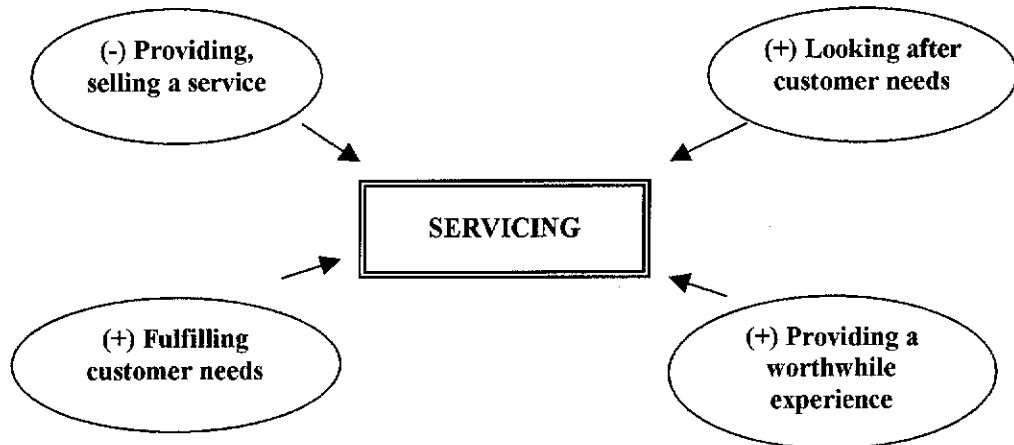


2. PROCESS OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

The meaning of customer focus in a process sense translated in the language in-use of Top Management Teams as a plethora of responses. Although numerous, wide ranging and strongly represented, these responses all pertained to phenomena concerned with *servicing*. In other words, process responses were explicitly linked to action. This sense of action was made most explicit by the property *meeting our vision in a particular way* under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

A sense for customer focus in process terms as pertaining to *servicing* was gained by conceptualising Top Management Team responses grouped under the sub category of the same name under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. *Servicing* emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. The *servicing* 'self interests' theme was conveyed by responses grouped under the property *providing, selling a service*. The *servicing* 'others' interests' theme was conveyed by the properties *looking after customer needs, providing a worthwhile experience* and *fulfilling customer needs*. The two themes were distinguished on the basis that 'others' interests' pertained to phenomena relating *servicing* in context with customer expectations or needs. Responses grouped under the 'self interests' theme conveyed a sense of *servicing* as doing a job or task. No relationship was made between *servicing* and customer needs or expectations. Properties of the *servicing* sub category are detailed in Map 5.9. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designated as (+) for 'others' interests' and (-) for 'self interests'.

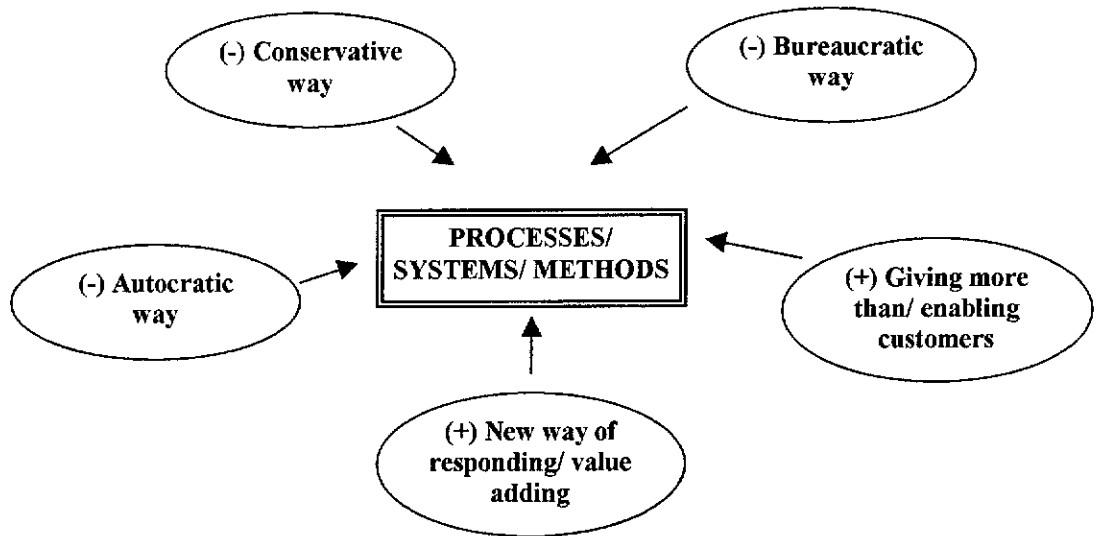
MAP 5.9: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Servicing



Strongly related to a process sense of customer focus as pertaining to *servicing* in terms of 'self interests' and 'others' interests' were Top Management Teams' responses grouped under the sub category label *processes/systems/methods*. *Processes/systems/methods* emerged under three categories, category 1, **structure of customer focus**, category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, and category 8, **finding out about customers**. For each category, *processes/systems/methods* was the most strongly supported and represented sub category. In other words, *processes/systems/methods* was strongly associated with **structure of customer focus**, **our understanding of ourselves as providers** and **finding out about customers**.

Customer focus in terms of *processes/systems/methods* under category 1, **structure of customer focus**, pertained to two distinct themes, labelled 'old' and 'new'. *Processes/systems/methods* categorised under the 'old' theme was represented by the properties labelled *conservative*, *bureaucratic* and *autocratic*. *Processes/systems/methods* categorised under the 'new' theme was represented by two properties labelled *new ways of responding/value adding* and *giving more than/enabling customers*. Properties of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 1, **structure of customer focus**, are detailed in Map 5.10. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designated as (+) for the 'new' and (-) for the 'old'.

MAP 5.10: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Processes/Systems/Methods Under the Structure of Customer Focus Category



The relationship that emerged was an association between the 'old' theme of *processes/systems/methods* and the 'self interests' theme of *servicing*. Similarly, a strong relationship emerged between the 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* and the 'others' interests' theme of *servicing*. In other words, 'new' *processes/systems/methods* for customer focus was associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'.

Top Management Team talk of customer focus in a process sense pertained to either:

- 'old' *processes/systems/methods* that *serviced* 'self interests';
- or:
- 'new' *processes/systems/methods* that *serviced* 'others' interests'.

A stronger sense for the underlying meanings associating the 'old' and 'new' themes of *processes/systems/methods* with the 'self interests' and 'others' interests' themes of *servicing* was gained by conceptualising the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under categories 4 and 8.

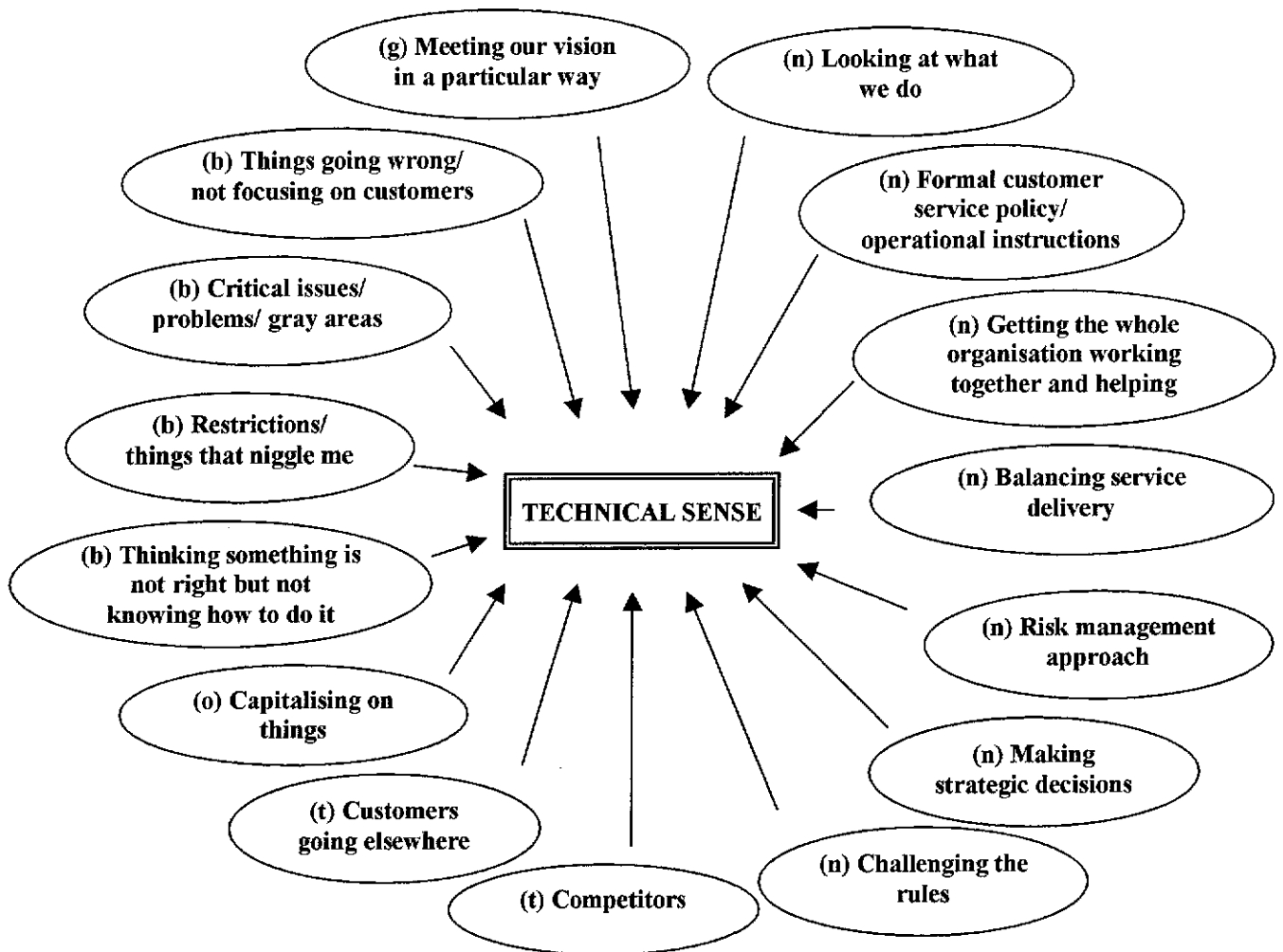
As a whole, category 4 was concerned with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. It was said to be concerned with 'self interests' as all responses grouped under the category pertained to phenomena associated with **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. *Servicing* 'self interests' in context of *processes/systems/methods*

pertained to technical aspects of organising. Technical in this sense conveyed a meaning of techniques of process. In other words, the meaning of *processes/systems/methods* under category 4 **our understanding of ourselves as providers** in context of *servicing* pertained to 'self interests', to the extent that action was concerned with technical aspects of organising.

Technical aspects of organising associated with *servicing* 'self interests' under *processes/systems/methods* emerged under five themes. These were labelled 'general', 'new', 'barriers', 'opportunities' and 'threats'. The 'general' theme was comprised of the one property *meeting our vision in particular way*. This was argued previously as providing evidence of *processes/systems/methods* as pertaining to action.

The remaining four themes were comprised of a variety of properties. Although the properties were distinguished on the basis of the theme of meaning to which they pertained, in a collective sense, all pertained to the same broader phenomenon. This broader phenomenon is argued as conveying a sense of the technical aspects to organising. Properties grounding the technical sense to *processes/systems/methods* under the **our understanding of ourselves as providers** category are detailed in Map 5.11. Indicated in Map 5.11 are the themes to which ideas grouped under the properties pertained, designated as (g) for 'general', (n) for 'new', (b) for 'barriers', (o) for 'opportunities' and (t) for 'threats'.

MAP 5.11: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Technical Sense to Processes/ Systems/Methods Under the Our Understanding Of Ourselves As Providers Category



Emerging in support of the finding of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, as pertaining to a *servicing* 'self interests' theme were responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 8, **finding out about customers**.

Arguably, category 8 conveyed a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests' in that all responses grouped under it pertained to **finding out about customers**. However, properties grounding the notion of *processes/systems/ methods* were interpreted as pertaining to technical aspects of organising. For example, all properties of the sub category *processes/systems/methods* pertained to action concerned with *measuring* and *evaluation*. Such action is firmly quantitative reflecting a technical bias to the processes of organising. In other words, *processes/systems/methods* under category

8 takes on the meaning of *servicing* 'self interests' to the extent that action was concerned with techniques of process in **finding out about customers**. In the talk of Top Management Teams, *processes/systems/methods* that pertained to *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' included the technical aspects of *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* and *bringing survey results back into the organisation*.

Building upon the picture of customer focus in a process sense described above, was a sense of 'old' *processes/systems/methods* and *servicing* 'self interests' as concerned principally with technical aspects of organisational life.

A finding requiring specific attention was the emergence of the 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Arguably, all responses grouped under category 4 pertained to technical aspects of organising in the sense such actions *service* 'self interests'. Technical actions which *service* 'self interests' are argued as pertaining to the broader theme of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*. The emergence of a 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* under category 4 appeared to contradict the themes grouped under the broader label of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

Grounding the apparent contradictory talk of the 'new' under a broader grouping of the 'old' was the level of support and representation for the 'new' theme under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Of the five themes comprising the *processes/systems/methods* sub category, the 'new' theme was the most strongly supported and represented. Responses conveyed a sense of 'new' in that they all pertain to *processes/systems/methods* that were required to be performed in acting in a customer focused way. In the language in-use of Top Management Teams 'new' technical aspects of organising included *looking at what we do, formal customer service policy/operational instructions, getting the whole organisation working together and helping, risk management approach, balancing service delivery with customer expectations, compromise between the standard and delivering to a want, making decisions/strategic decisions, challenging the rules, and tailoring/customising, to meet customer needs*.

Conceptualising this finding in context of the above discussion suggested that while Top Management Teams talk of 'new' *processes/systems/methods*, the talk was restricted to technical aspects of organising. In other words, while Top Management Team talk was of 'new' *processes/systems/methods*, the meaning of this talk was in *servicing* 'self interests' by 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

Further analysis of the properties for the 'new' theme under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, reinforced the notion of *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. Although a number of the responses implied an association between customers and processes (and therefore *servicing* 'others' interests'), the basis for these responses pertained to *servicing* anything other than 'others' interests'. For example, the property *balancing service delivery with customer expectations* implied acting in a way that would be of benefit to customers. However, in context of the category, the meaning for *servicing* translated to acting in a way that will benefit ourselves. *Balancing service delivery with customer expectations* was associated with the 'old' theme of *processes/systems/methods* as the actions of individuals emerged as dependent on the dictates of the technical system. In other words, processes were governed by 'self interests' to the extent that *balancing service delivery with customer expectations* implied acting on the basis of the capacity of the system to deliver (a form of 'self interests'), as opposed to acting in a way that conveyed a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests'. The notion of *balancing service delivery with customer expectations* as manifesting a 'self interests' sentiment is illustrated in the following sequence.

They [customers] had forgotten what was standard and were given an opportunity to say what do you think and then they said well this is what we want now, and it gets back to the want and need thing. You know, they [customers] were being provided with what they needed before, but there was a reservoir of wants that the survey has given vent to ... [1 interrupting] Because there is the issue of the capacity to believe it. This applying to that, especially when your clients are internal. Your clients can demand all they like but the problem is we have only certain capacity to deliver and if the system doesn't allow us to change that capacity then there is no way we will be able to meet the demand. So what 2 is saying is very accurate, it has to balance itself all the time, so what we can deliver and what they expect is somewhere close.

Supporting the argument above that a 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* in a technical sense pertained to *servicing* 'self interests' under the 'old' theme of *processes/systems/methods*, were responses grouped under the sub category *standards/performance indicators* under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. The sub category title suggested a technical interest to organising to the extent that *standards/performance indicators* implied an element of measuring. Insights to elements of measuring were gained from investigating properties grounding the *standards/performance indicators* sub category. *Standards/performance indicators* in the language in-use of Top Management Teams included *numbers of people coming through the doors, charging for services, financial returns, opening hours and accessibility*.

While *standards/performance indicators* emerged with a sense of measuring supporting the argument of a technical interest to *processes/systems/methods*, Top Management Teams were also saying that the quantitative requirements placed upon them by government were negative. This suggested that while Top Management Teams talk about customer focus in a *standards/performance indicators* context as measuring service delivery, *standards/performance indicators* imposed upon them were said to be *Mickey mouse, quick fix things*.

Based on the language in-use of Top Management Teams was the view of 'old' *processes/systems/methods* in a technical sense to include 'new' *processes/systems/methods*. In other words, talk of the 'new' conveyed sentiments of the 'old' in practice.

The relationship amongst the emergent themes for customer focus as pertaining to process in a technical sense are depicted in Figure 5.2.

FIGURE 5.2: *Themes of Customer Focus in a Process Sense as Talked About by Top Management Teams



* Positioning of the themes is arbitrary.

The strong support and representation for customer focus in the 'old' process way as pertaining to *processes/systems/methods* concerned with 'self interests' in a technical sense, was offset by moderate support and representation for customer focus in terms of 'new' processes. A sense of customer focus in *servicing* 'others' interests' in terms of 'new' *processes/systems/methods* was gained from conceptualising process in a

social context. Social in this sense refers to the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work.

No actions for customer focus in the sense of a 'new' theme pertaining to *servicing* 'others' interests' in a social context emerged under the sub category label of *processes/systems/methods*. From the argument above, the sub category label *processes/systems/methods* pertained only to technical aspects of organising. Actions concerned explicitly with *servicing* 'others' interests' in a social context emerged from Top Management Team responses as sub categories in their own right. Individually the sub categories were minimally represented, however when classified collectively, emerged as important.

An initial sense of the underlying meanings for the 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* as *servicing* 'others' interests' was gained by conceptualising data grouped under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The sub category *customer awareness* has been discussed above as pertaining to structure. The remaining two sub categories were classified as conveying a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests' in that all responses categorised under it pertained to processes of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Meanings of the social aspects of organising associated with *servicing* 'others' interests' in terms of process emerged from responses grouped under the labels *involvement* and *relationships*.

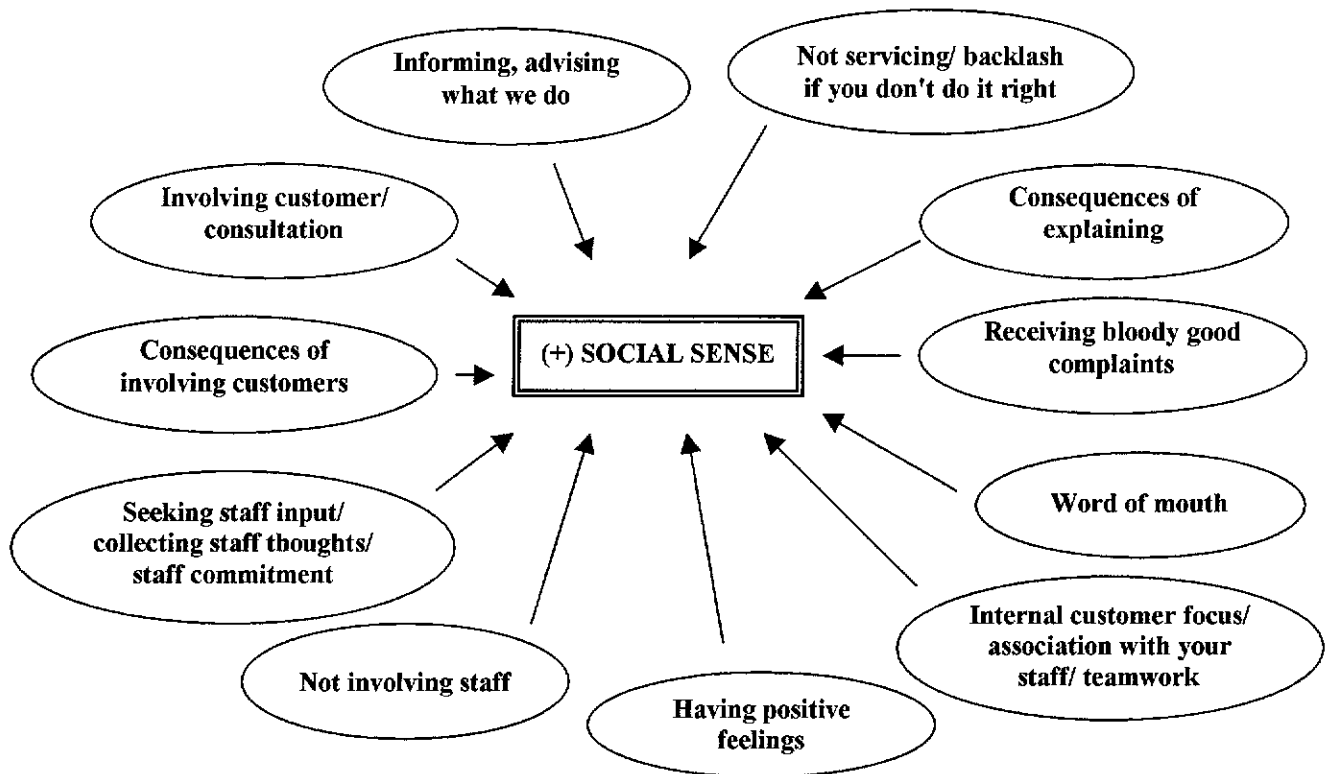
Involvement in the language in-use of Top Management Teams under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, included activities such as *explaining who the service providers are, what the service providers do, and what types of services are provided*. *Relationships* emerged as a stand-alone phenomenon. Both *involvement* and *relationships* were grounded in a process sense as pertaining to consultation and communication. A strong positive evaluation was associated with both phenomena. This strong positive evaluation emerged in the language in-use of Top Management Teams as *receiving bloody good complaints, now we [customers] want your [service providers] help, and this is fantastic, thanks very much*.

Involvement emerged a sub category under two other categories, category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and category 9, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. In category 9 *involvement* was associated with *commitment*. Both

sub categories were comprised of responses concerned with consultation and communication. Both associated *involvement* with customer focus in a positive sense. Properties of *involvement* under category 9, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**, shed light on its underlying meanings in a process context. In the language in-use of Top Management Teams, *involvement* meant *giving everybody in the organisation the chance to be involved in deciding what we will and will not do, seeking staff input, discussing things together with staff and making commitments with staff*.

Further evidence associating the 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* with *servicing 'others' interests* from a social perspective were responses grouped under the sub category *relationships* under category 9, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. Although category 9 was restricted to responses on internal organisational factors, a strong social sense to organising emerged from the properties. This social sense was conveyed in the language in-use of Top Management Teams as *internal customer focus, having an association with your staff and teamwork*. As with responses grouped under the label of *involvement*, *relationships* were also talked about in a positive light. In other words, *involvement* and *relationships* were positively related with acting in a customer focused way. Properties grounding the social sense to *processes/systems/methods* are detailed in Map 5.12.

MAP 5.12: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Social Sense to Processes/ Systems/Methods



Building upon the picture of customer focus in a process sense described above, was a sense of 'new' *processes/systems/methods* and *servicing* 'others' interests' as principally concerned with social aspects of organisational life.

Building the image of customer focus in a process sense to be associated with 'old' and 'new' *processes/systems/methods*, and *servicing* 'self interests' and 'others' interests', were responses grouped under the label of *change*. *Change*, in Top Management Team talk, was associated with both *mindsets/attitudes* and *processes/systems/ methods*. The former association has been discussed under the structure of customer focus analysis. It is the latter association that is of interest to the current discussion.

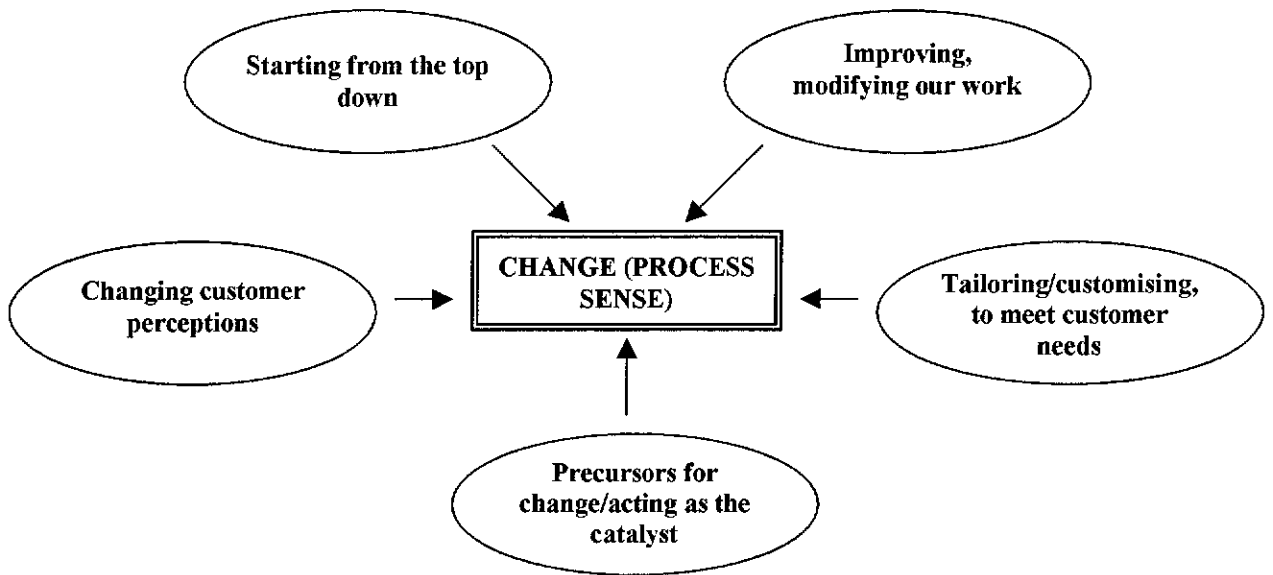
Change was associated with customer focus in a process sense under both category 2 **attitudes towards customers** and category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Under category 2, *change* in a process sense was represented by the property *starting from the top down*. Top Management Team responses specifically associated customer focus with action by suggesting that to act in a customer focused way required individuals higher up the hierarchy to demonstrate the required actions.

The underlying meaning of *change* in a process sense was revealed more explicitly under the property *improving, modifying our work*. Top Management Teams responses grouped under this property associated *change* with actions, which were argued as pertaining to the social organisational systems. For example, the dimensions *changing things based on feedback* and *communicating between ourselves and other service providers* associated organisational action with consultation and communication. *Change* in terms of consultation and communication was therefore aligned with social organisational processes.

Change, as indicated by the properties *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* and *changing customer perceptions* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, meant a shift in *processes/systems/methods* from the technical to the social aspects of organising. Dimensions for *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* included *getting organisations/staff together, need to communicate the change from a research to a customer orientation* and *everyone being a part of, and wanting it*. These dimensions strongly suggested *change* as pertaining to a shift from technical 'old' *processes/systems/methods* of *servicing* 'self interests' to 'new', social *processes/systems/methods* of *servicing* 'others' interests'. Properties grounding the notion of *change* in a process sense are detailed in Map 5.13.

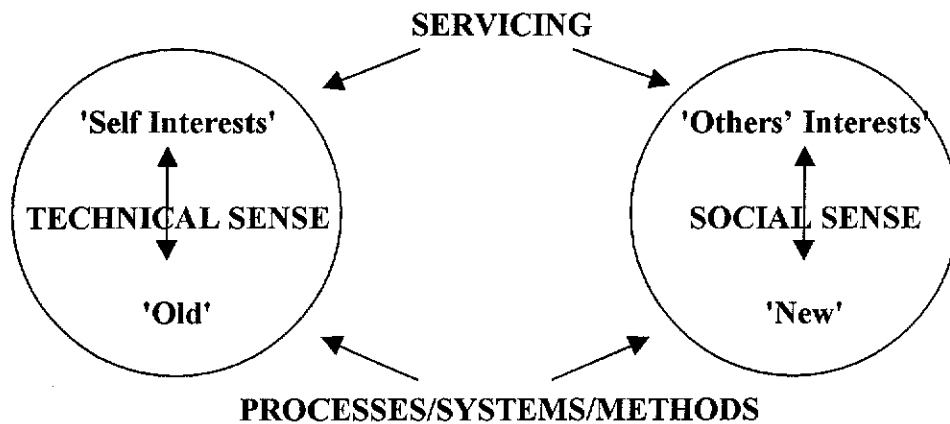
MAP 5.13: Top Management Team Properties Grounding the Notion of Change in a Process Sense



Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to *servicing* were Top Management Team responses on the phenomenon of *change*. While the data associated *change* with both *mindsets/attitudes* and *servicing*, in the latter context, there was well grounded support suggesting customer focus required a *change* in organisational process. *Change*, as indicated by the data, was a shift from the 'old' technical *processes/systems/methods* that *service* 'self interests' to the 'new' social *processes/systems/methods* that *service* 'others' interests'.

The relationships amongst the emergent themes for customer focus as pertaining to process are depicted in Figure 5.3.

FIGURE 5.3: Meaning of Customer Focus in a Process Sense as Talked About by Top Management Teams



INTERACTION OF THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS THEMES

Classification of the categorised data indicated that Top Management Teams think about customer focus in terms of structure and process. The classified data in terms of structure and process emerged as strongly relational. This relationship provided a frame of reference for constructing Top Management Team customer focus practice. In other words, the interaction of structure and process surfaced the more underlying meanings towards the customer focus phenomenon.

In a structural sense, customer focus pertained to two attitudes termed 'closed' and 'open'.

'Closed attitudes' were associated with 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* and an 'old' organisational *purpose and role*.

'Open attitudes' were associated with 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* and a 'new' organisational *purpose and role*.

In a process sense, customer focus pertained to two relationship types termed 'technical' and 'social'.

- 'Technical' relationships were associated with *servicing* 'self interests' and 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.
- 'Social' relationships were associated with *servicing* 'others' interests' and 'new' *processes/systems/methods*.

The relationship between structure and process conveyed a sense of customer focus from Top Management Teams' points of view as pertaining to two broad themes:

- 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships.
- 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships.

What therefore was the Top Management Teams practice embedded within these broad themes?

Interpretation of Top Management Team practice was made by grounding the categorised data back within the findings generated from analysis at the classification phase. Rowlinson and Procter (1999:370) refer to this as a process of reading texts against themselves. In other words, Top Management Team practice was constructed by grounding the content of responses within the two emergent broad themes of 'closed attitudes and technical relationships' and 'open attitudes and social relationships'.

A summary of sentiments conveyed by Top Management Team responses against themes emerged from classification of the data is detailed in Table 5.3. Table 5.3 includes code references for category, sub category and property labels comprising the two broad themes of 'closed attitudes and technical relationships' and 'open attitudes and social relationships'. Each row in the Table represents a line of analysis as argued under the classification phase. For each row of analysis, an interpretation is provided of the underlying meanings as conveyed by the data.

TABLE 5.3: Interpretation of the Meanings Conveyed by Top Management Team Responses Against the Two Major Themes Identified from Analysis of the Data at the Classification Phase.

Code	Category	Sub category	Property	Theme		Interpretation from categorised responses
				closed attitudes and technical relationships	open attitudes and social relationships	
1	2 Attitudes towards customers	Mindsets/attitudes		Negative	Positive	Individuals possess one of two types of mindsets/attitudes.
1	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Purpose and role		Old	New	Individuals hold one of two views on organisations purpose and role.
1 & 3	3 Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	Customer awareness		Negative		Top Management Team perceptions of customer awareness in terms of their understanding of service providers reflects sentiments held about customers as being more negative.
1 & 2	2 Attitudes towards customers	Customer awareness		Closed attitude	Open attitude	Top Management Team talk conveying a sentiment of customer awareness reflects one of two types of attitudes towards customers. Top Management Team talk on customer awareness is substantially more of the open attitude type.
4	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Change	Changing the culture/mindsets			To become customer focused requires changing the mindsets/attitudes individuals possess from the negative to the positive.
4			Starting to turn the ship /the big turn around			To become customer focused requires changing individuals' views of purpose and role from the old to the new.
5	2 Attitudes towards customers	Commitment to change	Carrying the thinking out			Customer focus requires individuals acting the open attitude out in practice.
1 & 2	1 Structure of customer focus	Servicing		Self interests	Others interests	Individuals' actions service one of two types of interests. Top Management Team talk on servicing is substantially more of the others interests type.
1		Processes/systems/ methods		Old	New	Individuals act according to one of two approaches.

TABLE 5.3: (Cont.)

1 & 3	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Processes/systems/ methods		Barriers, threats, opportunities and new		Techniques employed in being customer focused which service self interests are wide ranging. These include techniques framed in terms of new. Top Management Team talk of new techniques is strongly supported and is interpreted as doing old things in new ways.
3	8 Finding out about customers	Processes/systems/ methods			Measuring and evaluation	Top Management Team talk of techniques under the notion of servicing other interests emerge more substantially as technical in nature.
3	1 Structure of customer focus	Standards and performance indicators		Measuring		Technical standards and performance indicators are a part of customer focus. Technical standards imposed by government are viewed negatively, for example Mickey Mouse.
1 & 2	3 Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	Involvement			Positive	Top Management Team talk on process includes various techniques pertaining to the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. Collectively these techniques are strongly supported and convey a positive evaluation.
1 & 2		Relationships			Positive	
1 & 2	2 Attitudes towards customers	Involvement			Positive	
1 & 2	9 Organisational factors impacting on customer focus	Involvement and commitment			Positive	
1 & 2		Relationships			Positive	
5	2 Attitudes towards customers	Commitment to change	Starting from the top down			To act in a customer focused way requires those higher up the hierarchy to demonstrate the required actions.
5			Improving, modifying our work			Improving and modifying means performing social actions.
5	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Change	Precursor for change/acting as the catalyst			Social actions act as precursors and catalysts for change.

Interpretation of Top Management Teams customer focus practice as created from their talk emerged as pertaining to six central arguments. Evidence supporting central arguments 1 to 5 is indicated in Table 5.3 by the respective code references. The sixth central argument uses ideas developed in central arguments 1 to 5 in context with Top Management Team talk about *resources and capacity*.

1. Customer focus means thinking and acting in 'new' ways

Top Management Teams talk on customer focus was associated with two different ways of thinking and acting. In both a structure and process sense, customer focus was associated with either:

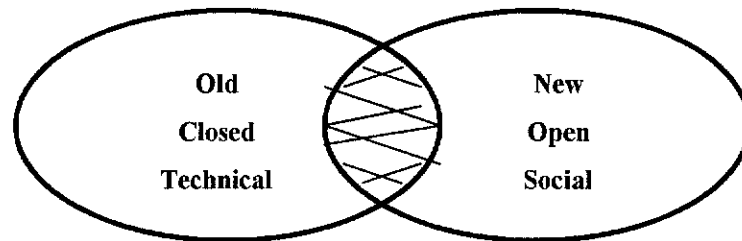
- 'old' ways of thinking and acting (referred to as *conservative, bureaucratic, autocratic and scientific*);
or
- 'new' ways of thinking and acting (referred to as *the attitude thing, new ways of responding, value adding, giving more than and enabling customer*).

While there was an association between thinking and acting in 'old' and 'new' ways, customer focus was strongly aligned with thinking and acting in the 'new' sense. The 'new' way of thinking was conveyed as an 'open attitude' underpinned by a 'positive' *mindset/attitude* that was aligned with the organisations' 'new' *purpose and role*. The 'new' way of acting was conveyed as a 'social' approach which meant *servicing* 'others' interests' by way of 'new' *processes/systems/methods*. *Servicing* 'others' interests' meant to provide service delivery in context with customer expectations or needs. 'Social' *processes/systems/methods* included *building relationships with, communicating with and involving*, customers.

Opposing the customer focus way of thinking and acting were responses that conveyed a sentiment of 'old' ways. The 'old' approach emerged as pertaining to a 'closed attitude' underpinned by a 'negative' *mindset/attitude* that was aligned with the organisation's 'old' *purpose and role*. The 'old' process meant *servicing* 'self interests' by way of 'old', 'technical' *processes/systems/methods*. *Servicing* 'self interests' meant doing a job. No relationship was made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. In other words, *servicing* 'self interests' pertained to what Workers perceived as the role or task they were required to perform from an organisational perspective. 'Technical' *processes/systems/methods* meant techniques of process, which included 'barriers', 'threats', 'opportunities', and 'new'.

The enacted customer focus premises of Top Management Teams are depicted in Figure 5.4. Figure 5.4, along with Figures 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7, take the role as building blocks for construing the enacted premise upon which conclusions on the premise-to-received practice relationship are formulated (see Figure 7.1).

FIGURE 5.4: Top Management Team Enacted Customer Focus Premises



2. Talk of the 'new' conveys sentiments of the 'new'

Support for Top Management Team talk on customer focus as pertaining to thinking and acting in a 'new' sense were instances of Top Management Teams actually thinking and acting in the 'new' way. These instances were explicitly conveyed by responses grouped under a number of categories as detailed following.

Under category 1, **structure of customer focus**, Top Management Team talk on *servicing* emerged as pertaining to two types of interests termed 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. The language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about *servicing* was substantially more of the 'others' interests' type. In other words, the language of Top Management Teams in talking about *servicing* conveyed strong sentiments of 'others' interests' in practice.

Under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, Top Management Team talk on *customer awareness* emerged as pertaining to two types of attitudes termed 'closed attitudes' and 'open attitudes'. The language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about *customer awareness* was substantially more of the 'open attitude' type. In other words, Top Management Teams' talk of *customer awareness* conveyed strong sentiments of an 'open attitude' in practice.

Under categories 2, 3 and 9, Top Management Team talk on processes that were associated with customer focus emerged as pertaining to *involvement*, *relationships*,

and *commitment*. Words spoken by Top Management Teams in talking about *involvement, relationships, and commitment* conveyed positive evaluations. In other words, the language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about customer focus in a social context conveyed a strong positive sentiment in practice.

In summary, the action of talk indicated that not only do Top Management Teams talk about customer focus in terms of thinking and acting in 'new' ways, but that they also did think and act in the 'new' way. In other words, there was evidence across the data that Top Management Teams were actually thinking and acting in 'new' ways.

3. Talk of the 'new' includes sequences of contradiction and ambiguity

A contradiction in Top Management Team talk emerged from responses grouped under the 'new' theme *processes/systems/methods* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. The contradiction rested with the labeling of responses as conveying a sense of 'new' *processes/systems/methods* within a category that was argued at a broader level as pertaining to 'old' *processes/systems/methods*. The contradiction is argued in the following way. Category 4 conveyed a sense of 'closed attitudes' and 'technical relationships' in that responses pertained to *servicing* 'self interests' in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Yet, included in Top Management Team talk about *servicing* 'self interests' were responses explicitly conveying a 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods*. The finding suggested a contradiction in meaning in that talk of the 'new' included sentiments of 'old' ways of thinking and acting.

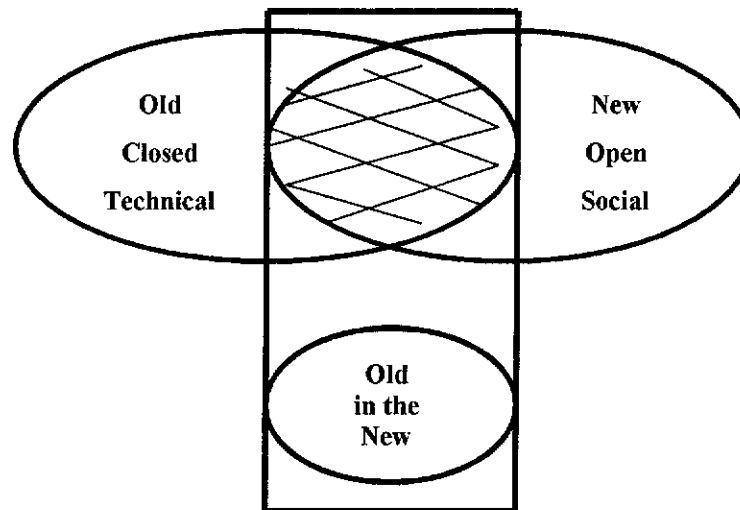
Reinforcing the contradiction of applying 'old' ways of thinking and acting under talk of the 'new' were responses concerned with *processes/systems/methods* grouped under category 8, **finding out about customers**. At a broad level, category 8 was concerned with the 'new' way in that **finding out about customers** implied a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests'. In other words, to *service* 'others' interests' required knowledge and understanding of 'others' needs and wants. Techniques of process grouped under the sub category *processes/systems/methods* under category 8 all emerged as quantitative approaches. In other words, while **finding out about customers** implied an interest in *building relationships with, communicating with and involving*, customers, techniques of process in acting in this way were principally concerned with a technical bias to organising. The contradiction that emerged is argued in the following way. Category 8 conveyed a sense of an 'open attitude' and 'social' relationships in that responses pertained to *servicing* 'others' interests' in

terms of **finding out about customers**. Yet, included in Top Management Team talk about *servicing* 'others' interests' were responses explicitly conveying sentiments of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

Further evidence heightening a contradiction in Top Management Team talk were responses grouped under *standards and performance indicators* under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. *Standards/performance indicators* emerged with a sense of measuring and evaluation supporting the argument of a technical interest to process. However, Top Management Teams also talked about the quantitative requirements placed upon them by government as being negative. The contradiction is that while Top Management Teams talked about customer focus in a *standards/performance indicators* context as measuring service delivery, the *standards/performance indicators* imposed upon them by government were *Mickey mouse, quick fix things*. In other words, talk of customer focus as **thinking and acting** in 'new' ways was ambiguous in context of **finding out about customers** using techniques of process that Top Management Team talk about as being negative.

Supporting the contradiction of applying 'old' ways of thinking and acting under talk of the 'new', were sentiments conveyed about customers in response grouped under *customer awareness* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. This sub category grouped Top Management Team talk on perceived customer attitudes, knowledge, and understanding, towards themselves. Words spoken by Top Management Teams in talking about *customer awareness* included negative sentiments about customers in terms of *not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations*. Negative sentiments about customers reflected a 'closed attitude' in terms of customer focus. In other words, the language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about *customer awareness* conveyed sentiments of a 'closed attitude' in practice. Top Management Team practice as created from their language in-use is depicted Figure 5.5.

FIGURE 5.5: Top Management Team Customer Focus Practice



4. Talk of the 'new' requires change

The strong representation and support for the 'old' and the 'new' in Top Management Team talk was made meaningful in context of *change*. Talk of 'closed attitudes and technical relationships' (the 'old') and 'open attitudes and social relationships' (the 'new') grounded the notion of *change*. In Top Management Team talk, 'open attitudes and social relationships' were a *change* from 'closed attitudes and technical relationships'. In other words, the 'new' was achieved by changing the thoughts and actions of individuals.

More explicitly, a *change* in thoughts required changing:

- *mindsets/attitudes* from the 'negative' to 'positive';
and
- perceptions of organisations *purpose and role* from the 'old' to the 'new'.

A *change* in actions required changing:

- processes from 'old' technical relationships that *service* 'self interests' to 'new' social relationships that *service* 'others' interests'.

Strengthening Top Management Team talk on the 'new' as requiring *change* were responses grouped under the property *starting to turn the ship/the big turn around* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Words spoken by

Top Management Teams about *change* indicated Workers' were perceived to have changed their on views on the organisation's *purpose and role*. In other words, the language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about *change* indicated Workers were perceived as holding the 'new' organisation's *purpose and role*.

5. Change is shorthand for developing social relationships

Top Management Team talk on the 'new' as requiring a *change* in individuals thoughts and actions provided surface meanings to the customer focus phenomenon. What it means to *change* to the 'new' surfaced the more underlying meanings for customer focus from Top Management Teams points of view.

The 'new' has previously been argued as pertaining to 'open attitudes and social relationships'. An initial sense for how the new was achieved was conveyed by responses grouped under the property *improving, modifying our work* under the sub category *commitment to change* under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Top Management Team talk of *improving and modifying* pertained to performing social actions. This was conveyed by the dimensions *changing things based on feedback* and *communicating between ourselves and other service providers*. Talk of *improving and modifying* in these terms associated action with the social organisational processes of *consultation* and *communication*. In other words, *change* in context of the 'new' meant performing social actions that *serviced* 'others' interests'.

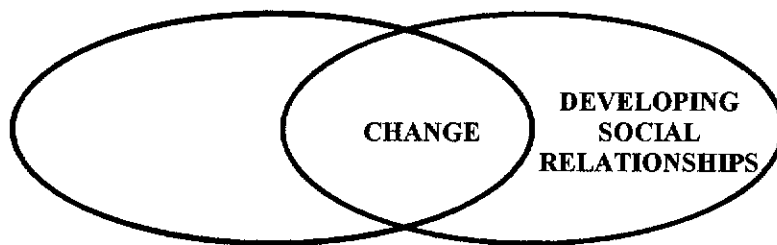
Strengthening the argument for Top Management Teams talk about *change* to mean developing social relationships were responses grouped under the sub category *committing to change*. More specifically, Top Management Teams talk about *carrying the thinking out*. *Carrying the thinking out* meant individuals had to act the 'open attitude' in practice. In other words, *carrying the thinking out* meant *building relationships with, communicating with, and involving*, customers. The manner in which Top Management Teams talked about *carrying the thinking out* suggested that *change* was achieved by controlling the way individuals think and act. In other words, Top Management Team talk about customer focus implied that the processes by which individuals think and act can be controlled and manipulated.

Two further elements to achieving *change* concerned Top Management Team talk on *starting from the top down* and *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst*. *Starting from the top down* meant that to think and act in a customer focus way required those

higher up the hierarchy to demonstrate the required thinking and actions in practice. Top Management Team talk under *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* indicated that social actions acted as the precursors/catalysts for *change*.

Collectively, talk of Top Management Teams in practicing the 'new' was concerned with developing social relationships. The meaning of *change* as enacted by Top Management Teams is depicted in Figure 5.6.

FIGURE 5.6: Meaning of Change as enacted by Top Management Teams



6. Talk of developing relationships conveys sentiments of control

A contradiction emerged from the Top Management Team talk on customer focus in terms of achieving *change*. While *change* was said to be achieved through *carrying the thinking out*, Top Management Teams also talked of *resources and capacity* as important factors influencing customer focus. The sub category *resources and capacity* was grouped under category 9, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The sub category pertained to technical aspects of organising, principally staff numbers and dollars. In other words, *resources and capacity* pertained to *servicing* 'self interests' in that responses grouped under the sub category were associated with technical aspects to organising. Top Management Team talk concerning *resources and capacity* indicated that there were not enough human and physical resources to bring about customer focus effectively.

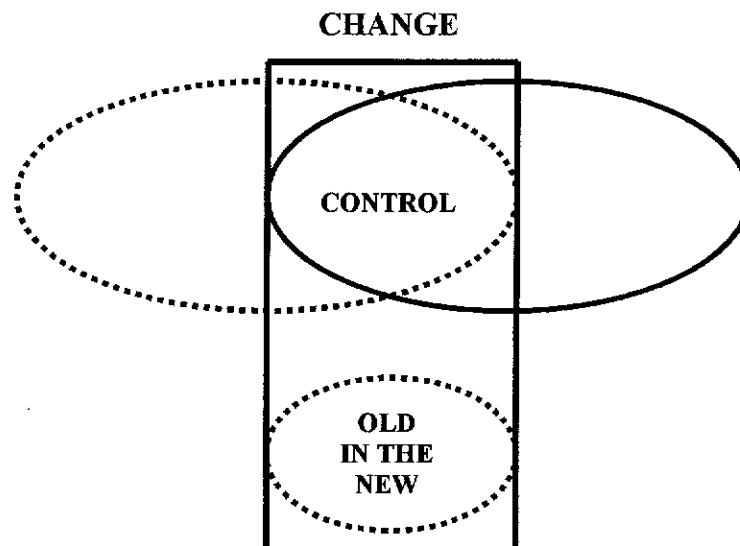
The contradiction in Top Management Team talk on *change* is argued as follows. On the one hand, acting in a customer focus way meant *carrying the thinking out*. *Carrying the thinking out* was a social phenomenon that meant *building relationships with, communicating with, and involving*, customers. On the other hand, customer focus was limited by organisations' *resources and capacity*. *Resources and capacity* were phenomena associated with technical aspects to organising. In other words, while talk of customer focus was aligned with social aspects of organising, bringing

about a *change* in individuals' social relationships were constrained by organisations' limited *resources and capacity*.

As argued under central argument 3 above in that talk of the 'new' included sentiments of the 'old', talk of achieving *change* by acting in a social way included sentiments of technical thinking to explain why *change* may not be realised. Put more simply, Top Management Team talked of technical phenomena as the basis for explaining why a *change* to thinking and acting in a social way may not be realised. Top Management Team talked about *change* as being dependent upon *resources and capacity*. Accordingly, *change* was perceived to be controlled by the technical inputs allocated to it. *Change* emerged as a balancing act, aimed at achieving congruence between environmental constraints and internal organisational needs.

Top Management Teams appeared to be unaware of the contradiction between their premise of customer focus (in the sense of developing social relationships) and their actual practice of control. That is, Top Management Team talk of the 'new' was embedded with 'old' practices of control. The meaning of *change* as practiced by Top Management Teams is depicted in Figure 5.7.

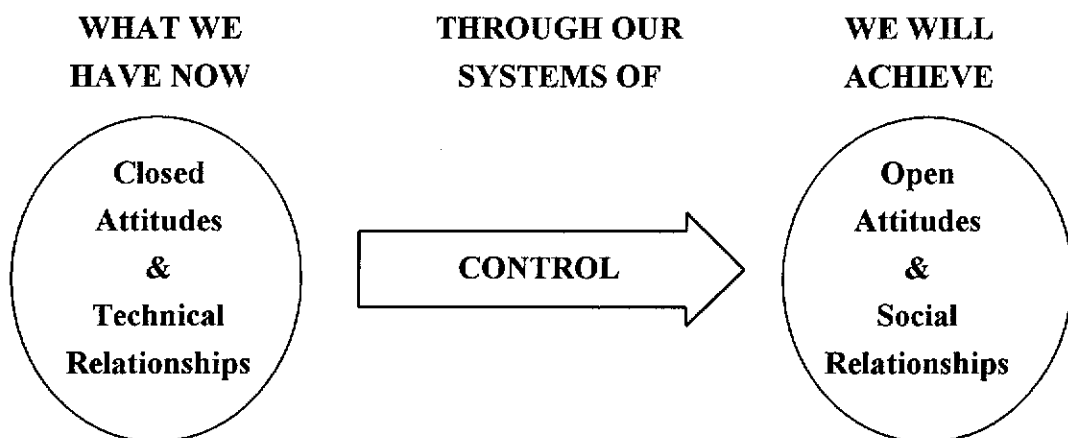
FIGURE 5.7: Meaning of Change as practiced by Top Management Teams



..... Talk elements that are practiced

In summary, the interaction of the structure and process themes provided insights into Top Management Team underlying meanings for customer focus. Conceptualising the data from the interest of establishing the way Top Management Teams operationalise what they think, customer focus emerged as pertaining to the phenomenon of control. In other words, the frame of reference for customer focus from the perspective of Top Management Teams was centrally concerned with controlling *change* from 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships to 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships. Top Management Team talk on customer focus included sequences of ambiguity and contradiction. This frame of reference is depicted in Figure 5.8.

FIGURE 5.8: Top Management Team Frame of Reference for Interpreting Customer Focus



Findings from analysis of Worker data at the 'categorisation' phase

This Chapter section overviews emergent categories and sub categories derived from analysis of the Worker data. Thick descriptions of individual categories and sub categories are detailed in Appendix 7.

Unlike Top Management Teams, Workers were asked two groups of questions. The first group of questions aimed to discover Worker perceptions on 'what they think about, and mean by, customer focus.' This group of questions enabled comparison of the meanings held by Top Management Teams and Workers towards the phenomenon of customer focus.

The second group of questions aimed to discover Worker points of view to major themes emerging from the Top Management Team data. These questions did not generate any further meaningful insights, for the purposes of this study, to what had emerged from the first group of questions. Consequently, no direct reporting of findings to the second group of questions asked of Workers is made. However, the responses conveyed insights into an alternate lens through which Workers view the phenomenon of 'organisation'. This lens serves as a point of reference in posing a future research agenda. Accordingly, a brief report on the findings made from analysis of responses to the phase two questions is made at the end of this Chapter under the section - Findings to Phase Two Worker questions.

Group one questions driving the interviews were concerned with understanding what Workers think about, and mean by, customer focus.

Eight major categories emerged from analysis of the Worker data. The categories varied in the degree of support and representation throughout the data. Each category was comprised of a number of sub categories. A summary of the eight major categories and sub categories from analysis for the Worker data is detailed in Table 5.4.

TABLE 5.4: Summary of Categories and Sub Categories for the Top Management Team Data

No	Category	Sub category
1	Structure of customer focus	<i>Servicing</i>
		<i>Service types</i>
		<i>Standards/performance indicators</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/methods</i>
		<i>End result/outcomes</i>
		<i>Assessment of performance</i>
2	Attitudes towards customers	<i>Customer awareness</i>
		<i>Committing to change</i>
		<i>Involvement</i>
		<i>Mindsets/attitudes</i>
3	Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	<i>Customer awareness</i>
		<i>Involvement</i>
		<i>Communication/relationships</i>
4	Our understanding of ourselves as providers	<i>Purpose/role</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/ methods</i>
		<i>Change</i>
5	Perceptions of customer focus	<i>Government customer focus program</i>
		<i>Top Management Team</i>
6	Customer factors impacting on customer focus	<i>Customer types</i>
		<i>Customer behaviours/ abilities</i>
		<i>Perceived customer status</i>
7	Finding out about customers	<i>Communication/building relationships</i>
		<i>Processes/systems/methods</i>
8	Organisational factors impacting on customer focus	<i>Resources and capacity</i>
		<i>Perceived purpose and role of government</i>
		<i>Management culture and role</i>
		<i>Relationships</i>
		<i>Involvement and commitment</i>
		<i>Staff/comportment of our people</i>
	<i>Structure</i>	

An overview of the categories based on the level of support and representation across the data follows.

Category 1, **structure of customer focus**, and category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, were the most represented across the six data sets.

Structure of customer focus was the most robust of the eight categories. The category was strongly supported and well represented across all data sets. This category suggested that customer focus was associated with *servicing, service types, standards and performance indicators, processes/systems/methods, end*

results/outcomes, and an *assessment of performance*. Of the six sub categories, *assessment of performance* was the most represented. This suggested Workers think about customer focus in performance terms.

Our understanding of ourselves as providers was also a strongly supported category. It was strongly represented across all data sets. The data strongly suggested customer focus was related to knowledge and understanding of both the organisations' *purpose and role*, and *processes/systems/methods* of service delivery. The sub category *change* suggested customer focus was associated with a *change* in terms of 'process' and 'mindsets/attitudes'. Numerous properties and dimensions emerged for this category which suggested **our understanding of ourselves as providers** was strongly associated with customer focus.

Category 5, **perceptions of customer focus**, was well supported across the data but to a lesser extent than categories 1 and 4. This category suggested customer focus was influenced by Workers' **perceptions of customer focus**. These perceptions emerged as pertaining to two key phenomena or sub categories: perceptions on the *government's customer focus program*; and **perceptions of customer focus** as exhibited by *Top Management Teams*. Responses concerning Worker **perceptions of customer focus** as exhibited by *Top Management Teams* were more strongly represented throughout the data. The strong representation of responses suggested Worker **perceptions of customer focus** as exhibited by *Top Management Teams* was foremost in Workers minds when thinking about customer focus.

Category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, was also a well supported category. It was well represented across all data sets. **Attitudes towards customers** was strongly represented in terms of *customer awareness*, *committing to change* and *mindsets/attitudes*. The *mindsets/attitudes* sub category suggested that differences in service delivery approaches were related to differing frames of reference. These were expressed as either the *attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* or *bureaucratic/public service mentality*.

Properties of the *customer awareness* sub category emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'open attitude' and 'closed attitude'. The attitude type was determined on the basis of theme of meaning conveyed by the response. These meaning were either inclusive or exclusive of customers. *Committing to change* was the most represented sub category for the **attitudes towards customers** category. *Commitment* pertained to both *changing* and *improving*, existing servicing delivery

practices. *Commitment to change* was linked to **attitudes towards customers** in that *changes* and *improvement* on existing servicing delivery practices were related with *mindsets/attitudes*. Finally, **attitudes towards customers** was, to a lesser extent, supported in terms of *involvement*. *Involvement*, as indicated by the data, pertained to *consultation* and *customer involvement*.

Of the remainder, category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, category 6, **customer factors impacting on customer focus**, and category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**, were moderately supported throughout the data.

Customer understanding of ourselves as providers grouped responses that pertained to Worker perceptions of what customers think about themselves as providers. The category was most strongly represented by the sub category *customer awareness*. *Customer awareness* grouped responses concerning Worker perceptions of customer attitudes, knowledge and understanding. Worker thoughts on customer perceptions of themselves as service providers emerged as pertaining to two themes that indicated either a 'positive' or 'negative' perception of customers. *Customer awareness* in a 'negative' sense was substantially more represented than it was in a 'positive' sense. **Customer understanding of ourselves as providers** also emerged in terms of *involvement* and *relationships*. *Involvement* and *relationships* were represented across the data to a lesser extent than the *customer awareness* sub category.

Customer factors impacting on customer focus, grouped responses concerning Worker perceptions of attributes of customers which influence service delivery. The category was most strongly represented by the property *customer behaviours and abilities*. The data grouped a wide range of *customer behaviours and abilities* that influence the type of service provided. The majority of *behaviours and abilities* talked about by Workers conveyed a negative evaluation. *Customer types* emerged as the next most supported sub category. No clear picture emerged as to what was a *customer*. Rather, *customer types* were various depending upon the context in which they were referred to. The least represented **customer factor impacting on customer focus** was *perceived customer status*. The data suggested some customer types received better servicing than others.

Organisational factors impacting on customer focus grouped responses concerning Worker perceptions of organisational factors that influence service

delivery. Seven *organisational factors* emerged, of which *resources and capacity* was the most strongly represented. Overall, data conveying a 'restraining' sense in terms of the *capacity to deliver* was supported more strongly than data conveying an 'enabling' sense. The remaining six factors, namely *relationships, perceived purpose and role of government agencies, staff/comportment of our people, involvement and commitment, management culture and role and structure* were supported to varying degrees across the data. The numerous properties and dimensions to the sub categories indicated a depth of *organisational factors* associated with customer focus.

Category 7, **finding out about customers**, emerged as the least supported category. The category was represented by two sub categories labelled *communication/building relationships* and *processes/systems/methods*. *Processes/systems/methods* was the most supported sub category of the **finding out about customers** category. The sub category pertained principally to actions concerned with *finding things out about customers*. The actions emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'proactive' and 'reactive'. Of the two, 'proactive' *processes/systems/methods* emerged more strongly than 'reactive' types. Emerging weakly was a relationship between **finding out about customers** and *communication and building relationships*.

Findings from analysis of Worker data at the 'classification' phase

This Chapter section groups data on the basis of themes identified from the categorisation phase.

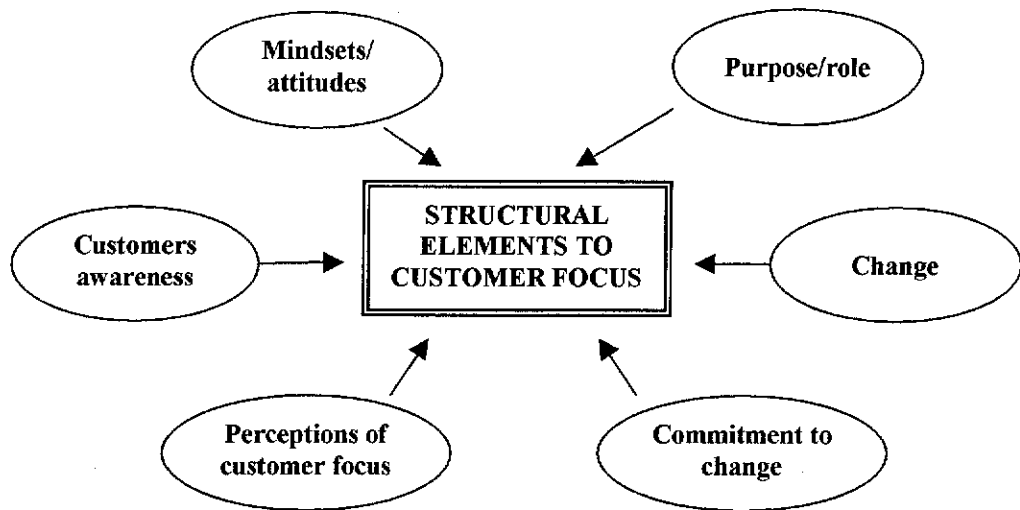
Organising the data on the basis of the themes identified from the categorisation phase emerged a clearer picture of the meanings held by Workers towards customer focus. As was the case with Top Management Teams, the Worker data demonstrably supported the notion of customer focus as pertaining to two dominant phenomena. These were:

- *mindsets/attitudes*;
- and
- *servicing*.

The *mindsets/attitudes* phenomenon related to structural aspects of customer focus. Structure of customer focus was associated with responses pertaining to 'what we do'.

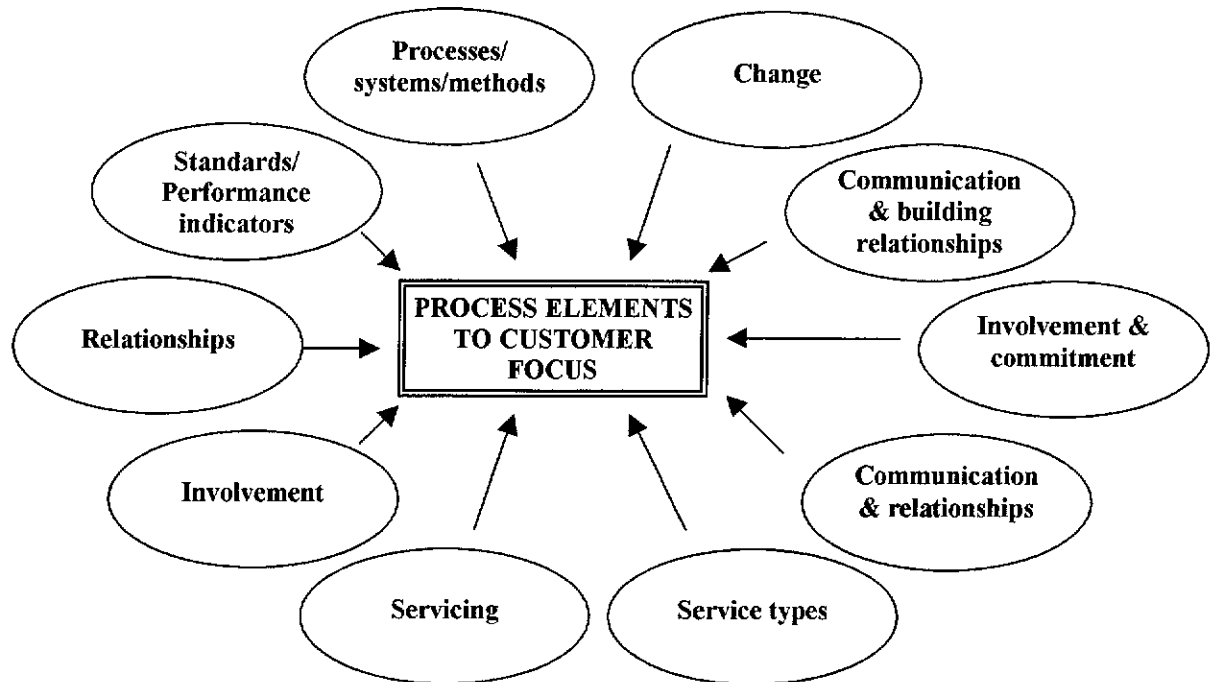
Sub categories grounding the notion of customer focus in a structural sense are detailed in Map 5.14.

MAP 5.14: Worker Sub Categories Grounding Customer Focus in a Structural Sense



The *servicing* phenomenon related to processual aspects of customer focus. Process of customer focus was associated with responses pertaining to 'how we do it'. Sub categories grounding the notion of customer focus in a process sense are detailed in Map 5.15.

MAP 5.15: Worker Sub Categories Grounding Customer Focus in a Process Sense



Worker perceptions on structure and process conveyed a sense of what respondents say they think - the meanings taken (Worker enacted) context. As with the Top Management Team data, both the structural and processual aspects of customer focus emerged as strongly relational. In other words, the themes of structure and process emerging from Worker responses on customer focus existed in a strong relationship. The merging of structure and process enabled analysis of the way Workers operationalise what they think - the received practice context. In other words, the interaction of structure and process *is* organising received in practice from Workers' points of view.

Findings at the classifying phases are presented in two parts. First, analyses of the structure and process themes are detailed. The classified data as themes is the Worker customer focus talk. This is followed with analysis of the interaction of the two themes as supported by the data. The interaction of the classified data represents Worker received practice.

ANALYSIS OF MAJOR THEMES

Responses grouped under each category emerged as pertaining to major phenomena and dominant themes. Dominant themes conveyed sentiments that Workers hold towards the customer focus phenomenon. Analysis of major phenomena, dominant

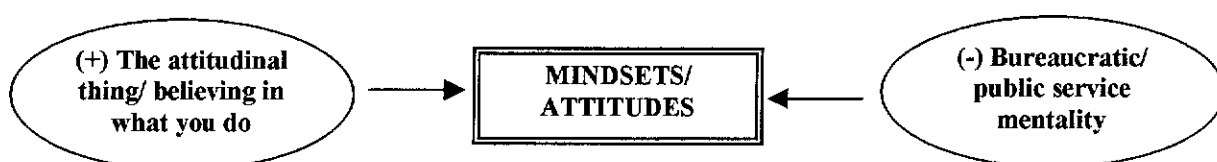
themes and sentiments conveyed by the themes, for each category is presented following.

1. STRUCTURE OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

The meaning of customer focus in a structural sense translated in the words of Workers as types of *mindsets/attitudes*. Evidence for customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to types of *mindsets/attitudes* was strongly supported across the data as described previously at the categorisation phase of the analysis.

Structural elements of customer focus in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* were moderately represented under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, under the sub category of the same name. Workers talk of *mindsets/attitudes* was categorised under the labels *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* and *bureaucratic/ public service mentality*. Responses grouped under each *mindset/attitude* type were associated with positive and negative evaluations. Responses conveying positive evaluations were associated with *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* property. Responses conveying negative evaluations were associated with the *bureaucratic/ public service mentality* property. Properties of the *mindsets/attitudes* sub category are detailed in Map 5.16. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designed as (+) for positive and (-) for negative.

MAP 5.16: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Mindset/Attitudes



Related to a structural sense of customer focus as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were Worker responses concerning *purpose and role* grouped under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Purpose and role emerged as pertaining to four themes termed 'general', 'not shared', 'talked about' and 'balancing'. The 'general' theme was illustrated by the properties *knowing our purpose/the track we're taking* and *knowing the job/understanding what we do*. The 'not shared' theme was illustrated by seven properties *not looking at the*

*overall picture, customer focus is not something you think about everyday/its just your personal customer focus that you do, only knowing one side of it/don't know, one of the best kept secrets/managers assume Workers' and managers' views on customer focus are aligned, everybody's doing their own thing/not all on the same wave-length, people tend to ignore customer focus/we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it off and providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right. The 'talked about' theme was illustrated by the property *customer focus is talked about/customer focus has been put into writing*. The 'balancing' theme was illustrated by the properties *trying to get the two things working together/being the meat in the sandwich/getting a compromise between the two and having to say 'no' sometimes/you can't please everybody*.*

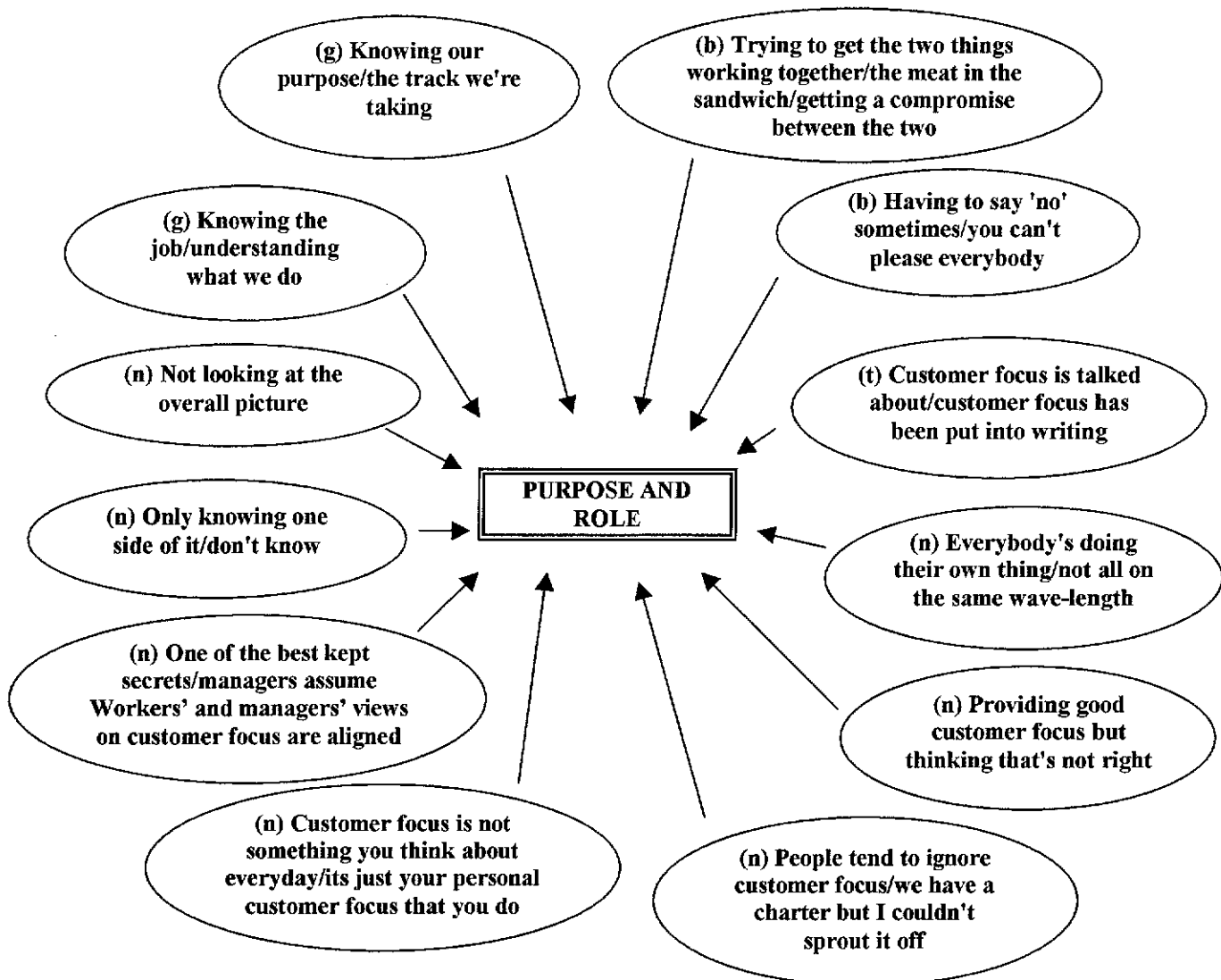
Responses were grouped under the theme of 'not shared' in the sense that customer focus was perceived by Workers as something performed by individuals rather than something performed by the organisation as a whole. In other words, dimensions to properties grouped under the 'not shared' theme conveyed a sense of different levels of understanding concerning the organisation's *purpose and role*.

The theme of 'talked about' was generated from properties and dimensions which included responses indicating *plenty of meetings going on, quite a lot of talk about it, putting out reams and reams of paper and having nice charters*. Overall, there was a strong perception that customer focus was *very much around the place*.

The 'balancing' theme pertained to two phenomena: what the public expects of service providers; and what service providers actually offer to the public. In this context, 'balancing' emerged as pertaining to *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests' (what the public expects of service providers) with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' (what the service providers actually offer to the public).

Properties of the *purpose and role* sub category are detailed in Map 5.17. Indicated in Map 5.17 are the themes to which ideas grouped under the properties pertained, designated as (g) for 'general', (n) for 'not shared', (t) for 'talked about' and (b) for 'balancing'.

MAP 5.17: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Purpose and Role



The relationship that emerged was an association between *mindsets/attitudes* conveying positive evaluations and the 'balancing' theme of *purpose and role*. In other words, responses grouped under *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* were associated with responses grouped under *purpose and role* in a 'balancing' sense. Similarly, a strong relationship emerged between *mindsets/attitudes* conveying negative evaluations and both the 'not shared' and 'talked about' themes of *purpose and role*. In other words, responses grouped under *bureaucratic/ public service mentality* were associated with responses grouped under *purpose and role* in a 'not shared' and 'talked about' sense.

A key aspect to the 'balancing' theme was the phenomenon to which it pertained. Responses grouped under the 'balancing' theme pertained to *servicing*. *Servicing*, as

the discussion following argues, pertained to customer focus in a processual sense. In other words, customer focus in a structural sense of *mindsets/attitudes* pertained to 'balancing' *service* deliver between 'self interests' and 'others' interests' - see section on process of customer focus following. Accordingly, 'balancing' was interpreted to mean 'balancing interests'.

Worker talk of customer focus in a structural sense pertained to either:

- *mindsets/attitudes* conveying negative evaluations which related to organisations *purpose and role* in terms of 'not shared' and 'talked about'; or
- *mindsets/attitudes* conveying positive evaluations which related to organisations *purpose and role* in terms of 'balancing interests'.

Mindsets/attitudes conveying positive evaluations and the 'balancing interests' theme of *purpose and role* were strongly related to responses about customer focus in terms of *customer awareness*.

Customer awareness emerged as a sub category in two categories, category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The notion of *customer awareness*, in a structural sense, pertained to responses concerning attitudes, knowledge and understanding. It appeared under different categories as the context to which the attitudes, knowledge, and understanding referred were either from a self (category 2) or perceived customer (category 3), point of view.

Customer awareness under category 3 **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** underpinned thinking on customer focus in a structural sense to the extent that perceived customer understanding and knowledge of service providers was a function of *mindsets/attitudes*. *Customer awareness* emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'positive' and 'negative'. The 'positive' theme grouped responses that conveyed perceptions of customers in a positive sense. One property was grouped under the 'positive' theme, namely *customers aware of what we do/customers understanding exactly the services we provide*. The 'negative' theme grouped responses that conveyed perceptions of customers in a negative sense. Properties grouped under the 'negative' theme were *management view my job as unimportant/its a job a trained monkey could do, customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them, customers come to see what they in their own mind*

want to see/customers always sort of want to get their own and customers not interested in what we do/customers want to do their own thing.

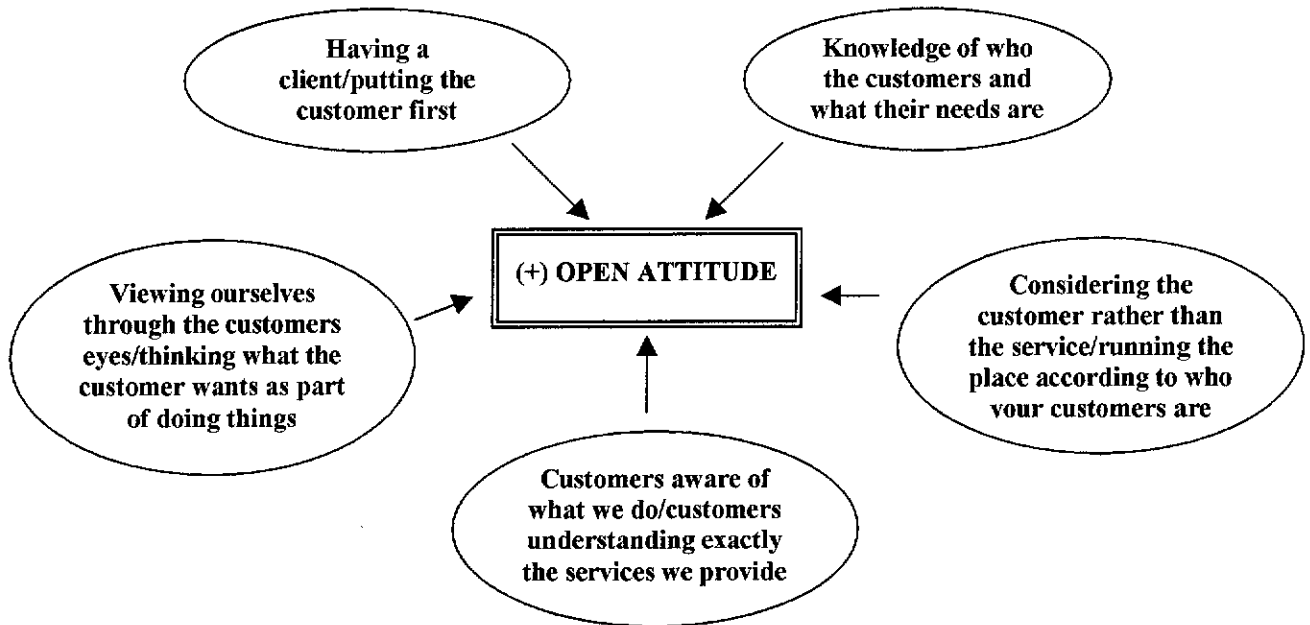
Customer awareness under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**; more explicitly supported responses about customer focus in a structural sense in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* by way of two related themes. These themes were termed 'closed attitude' and 'open attitude'.

The 'open attitude' theme was associated with the properties *having a client/putting the customer first, knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are, viewing ourselves through the customers eyes/thinking what the customer wants as part of doing things, and considering the customer rather than the service/running the place according to who your customers are.* The notion of an 'open attitude' emerged from the data which suggested *customer awareness* required Workers to both think about the things they do from the perspective of the customer, and to provide things customers needed rather than simply doing things. In other words, the data conveyed a sense of doing the right things rather than simply doing things right.

The 'closed attitude' theme was associated with the property *not having to deal with people on the outside.* Responses were categorised under the theme of a 'closed attitude' as the data suggested customer focus related only to phenomena associated with external people.

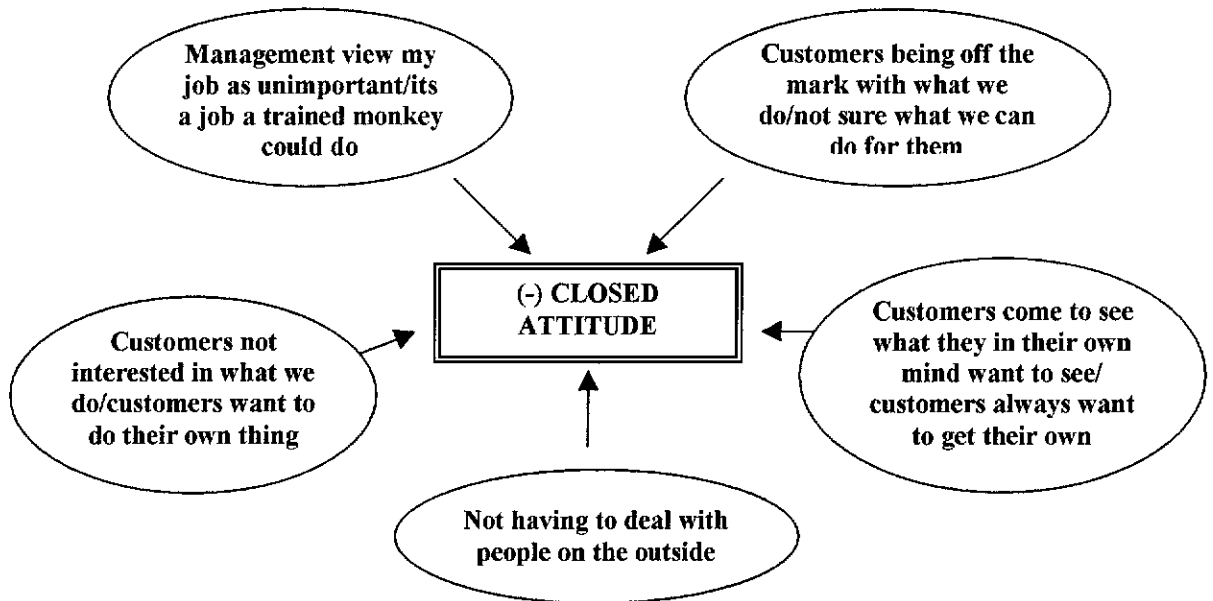
Responses across the two *customer awareness* sub categories were linked as follows. The property *customers aware of what we do/customers understanding exactly the services we provide* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, emerged as being strongly related with properties grouped under the 'open attitude' theme under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the 'open attitude' theme are detailed in Map 5.18.

MAP 5.18: Worker Properties Grounding the 'Open Attitude' Theme



The properties *management view my job as unimportant/its a job a trained monkey could do, customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them, customers come to see what they in their own mind want to see/customers always sort of want to get their own and customers not interested in what we do/customers want to do their own thing* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, emerged as being strongly related with the property grouped under the 'closed attitude' theme under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the 'closed attitude' theme are detailed in Map 5.19.

MAP 5.19: Worker Properties Grounding the 'Closed Attitude' Theme



Building upon the picture of customer focus in a structural sense described above, was a strong relationship between *mindsets/attitudes* and *customer awareness*. Worker talk of customer focus was further grounded as pertaining to two types of attitudes.

- The relationship between the 'positive' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'balancing interests' theme of *purpose and role* was embodied under an 'open attitude' theme of *customer awareness*. The 'open attitude' of *customer awareness* in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers** was strongly associated with positive perceptions of customers from a perceived **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** perspective.
- The relationship between the 'negative' theme of *mindsets/attitudes*, and the 'not shared' and 'talked about' themes of *purpose and role* was embodied under a 'closed attitude' theme of *customer awareness*. The 'closed attitude' of *customer awareness* in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers** was strongly associated with negative perceptions of customers from a perceived **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** perspective.

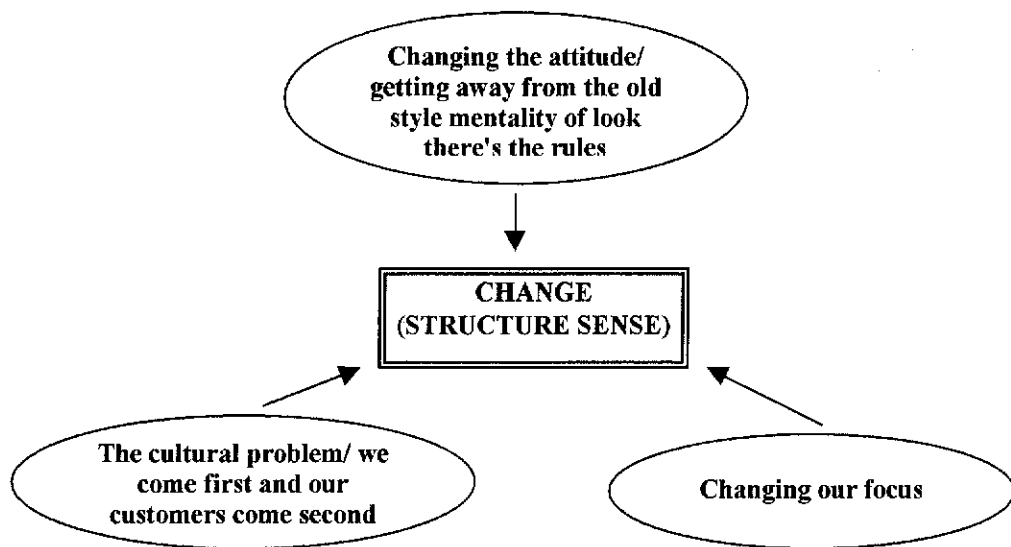
Strengthening the argument for customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were responses grouped under the label of *change*. *Change* was associated with customer focus in both a structure and process sense. It is the former association that is of interest to the current discussion.

Change emerged as a sub category labelled *commitment to change* under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and as a sub category labelled *change* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Change in a structural sense of *mindsets/attitudes* was strongly represented under category 4 in the properties *changing the attitude/getting away from the old style mentality of look there's the rules and the cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second*, and under category 2 in the property *adjusting to customers ways of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer*. In the former category, Worker responses specifically associated customer focus with a *change* in *mindsets/attitudes* conveying 'negative' evaluations, to *mindsets/attitudes* conveying 'positive' evaluations. In other words, changing from the *bureaucratic/ public service mentality to the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do*. In the latter category, Workers were saying that in order to be customer focused, individuals needed to *adjust to customers' ways of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer*. In other words, adopting an 'open attitude' theme of *customer awareness* as described above.

The property *changing our focus* under the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, strengthened the association of customer focus with *mindsets/attitudes*. *Change* in this context referred to a shift in *mindsets/attitudes* (focus) from the 'not shared' and 'talked about' themes of *purpose and role* to the 'balancing interests' theme. In other words, a link emerged between *purpose and role* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, and *mindsets/attitudes* conveying positive and negative evaluations under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Properties grounding the notion of *change* in a structure sense are detailed in Map 5.20.

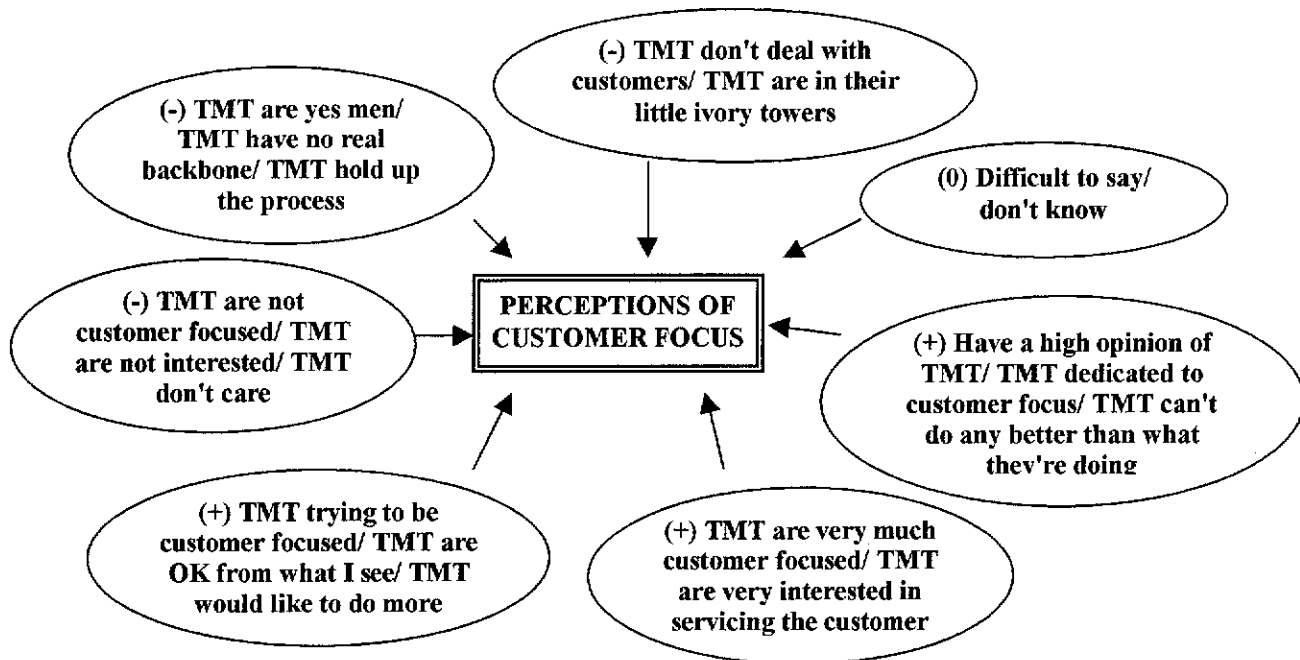
MAP 5.20: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Change in a Structural Sense



Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were Worker responses on the phenomenon of *change*. While the data associated *change* with both structure and process, in the former context, there was well grounded support suggesting customer focus required a *change* in Worker *mindsets/attitudes*. *Change*, as indicated by the data, linked the notion of *mindsets/attitudes* with both *purpose and role* and *customer awareness*.

Further evidence supporting a structural sense to customer focus in terms of *mindsets/attitudes* were responses grouped under category 5, **perceptions of customer focus**. Category 5 was comprised of responses that shed light on respondents' experience with customer focus. The category label itself, **perceptions of customer focus**, conveyed a sense of *mindsets/attitudes* to the extent that perceptions were inextricably linked with mental models. Properties grounding the **perceptions of customer focus** category are detailed in Map 5.21. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designed as (+) for positive, (-) for negative and (0) for no evaluation.

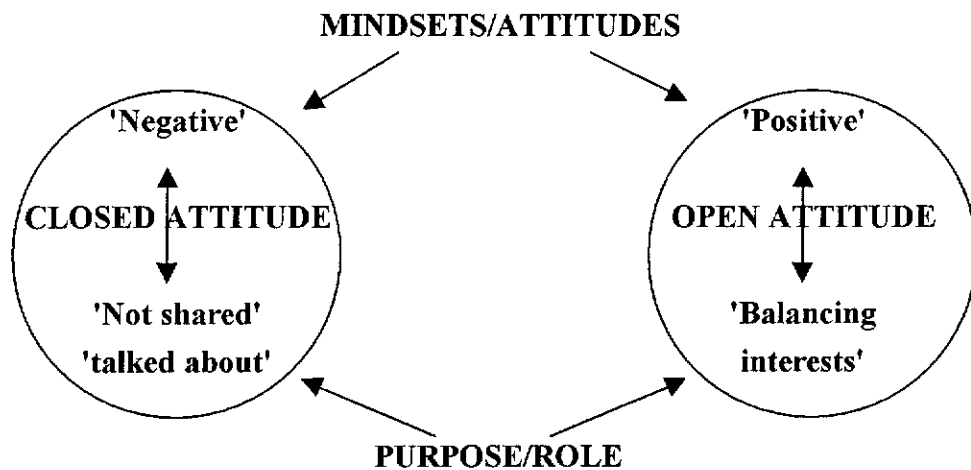
MAP 5.21: Worker Properties Grounding the Perceptions of Customer Focus Category



Workers' experiences with customer focus emerged from the data as pertaining to the *government customer focus program* and *Top Management Teams*. The category was strongly supported across the data. Worker responses grouped under category 5 suggested **perceptions of customer focus** were of a more positive type. In other words, respondents' experiences with the *government customer focus program* and *perceptions of customer focus* as exhibited by *Top Management Teams* were in the main more 'positive' than 'negative'. This suggested Worker *mindsets/attitudes* towards customer focus were informed by more positive experiences.

The relationships amongst the emergent themes for customer focus in a structural sense are depicted in Figure 5.9.

FIGURE 5.9: Meaning of Customer Focus in a Structural Sense as Talked About by Workers



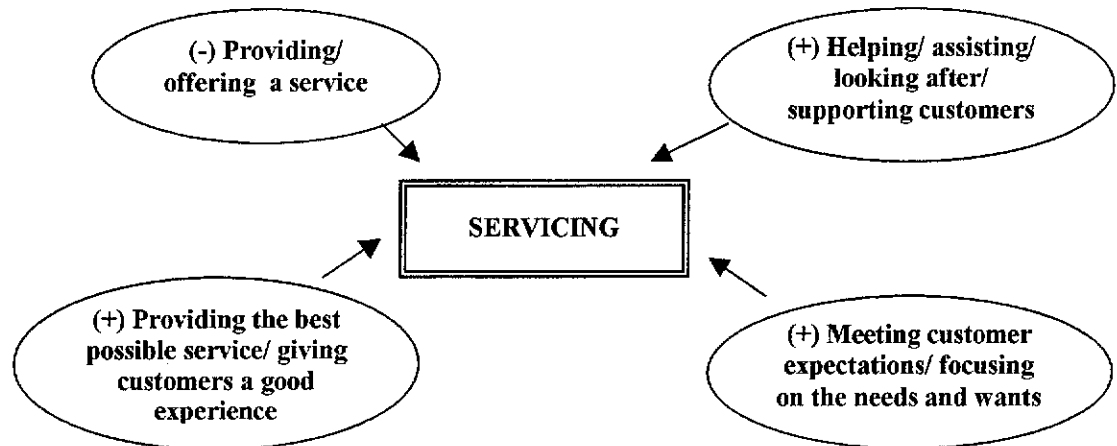
2. PROCESS OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

The meaning of customer focus in a process sense translated in the words of Workers as a plethora of responses. Although numerous, wide ranging and strongly represented, these responses all pertained to phenomena concerned with *servicing*. In other words, process responses were explicitly linked to action. This sense of action was made most explicit by the property *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what is put into practice* under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. This property illustrated that customer focus pertained to both structure (in the sense of *what's talked about* and *the plan*) and action (in the sense of *not what happens* and *put into practice*).

A sense for customer focus in process terms as pertaining to *servicing* was gained by conceptualising Worker responses grouped under the sub category of the same name under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. Properties and dimensions of the *servicing* sub category pertained to two themes. These themes conveyed *servicing* in the sense of either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'. The *servicing* 'self interests' theme was generated from data grouped under the *providing, offering a service* property. No relationship was made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. The *servicing* 'others' interests' theme was generated from data associating service delivery with customer expectations and needs. Customer expectations and needs were viewed as strongly related with service provision. *Servicing* in this sense conveyed the meaning of doing a job or task in context of customer expectations or needs. The job or task, in the words of Workers, was expressed as *helping, assisting,*

looking after and supporting. Properties of the *servicing* sub category are detailed in Map 5.22. Evaluations as conveyed by responses grouped under the properties are designated as (+) for 'others' interests' and (-) for 'self interests'.

MAP 5.22: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Servicing



Further evidence for customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to *servicing* 'self interests' and 'others' interests' was grounded in responses grouped under the sub category *service types*, under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. Properties of the *service types* sub category were distinguished from one another on the nature of the theme implied by the responses. The themes, once again, expressed either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'. Responses grouped under the 'self interests' theme suggested *service types* pertain to doing a job or task. In other words, *service types* under the 'self interests' theme pertained to what Workers perceived as the role or task they were required to perform from an organisational perspective. Responses grouped under the 'others' interests' theme suggested *service types* pertain to perceptions of customers needs or wants. In other words, *service types* under the 'others' interests' theme pertained to what Workers perceived as customers needs or wants.

Strongly related to a process sense of customer focus as pertaining to *servicing* in terms of 'self interests' and 'others' interests' were Worker responses grouped under the sub category labelled *processes/systems/methods*. *Processes/systems/methods* emerged under three categories, namely category 1, **structure of customer focus**, category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers** and category 7, **finding out about customers**. Across categories 4 and 7, *processes/systems/methods* was the most strongly supported and represented sub category. Across category 1,

although not the most robust, *processes/systems/methods* was strongly supported and represented. In other words, *processes/systems/methods* was strongly associated with **structure of customer focus, our understanding of ourselves as providers and finding out about customers**. *Processes/systems/methods* also emerged as a theme labelled 'process' in context of *change* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Customer focus in terms of *processes/systems/methods* under category 1, **structure of customer focus** emerged as pertaining to three distinct themes, labelled 'various', 'others' interests' and 'social'.

The 'various' theme was represented by one property labelled *the way we treat customers/dealing with customers*. Dimensions to the property were numerous which indicated the wide range of *processes/systems/methods* applied by organisations in being customer focused. In other words, there were 'various' actions undertaken by organisations as part of the **structure of customer focus**. The remaining two themes provided insights into the more underlying meanings for *processes/systems/methods*.

Processes/systems/methods in the sense of 'others' interests' was gained from responses that linked actions undertaken by organisations with customer expectations and needs. This was strongly conveyed by the property labelled *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required*.

Processes/systems/methods in the sense of 'social' was gained from responses which linked actions undertaken by Workers with consultation, communication and relationships. This was strongly illustrated under the property labelled *interaction with customers/talking to customers*.

The relationship that emerged was an association between *processes/systems/methods, servicing* and *service types*. The Worker data indicated that customer focus, in a process sense, pertained to 'social' actions which *service* 'others' interests', and actions that *service* 'self interests'. Although *servicing* and *service types* both emerged in terms of 'self interests' and 'others' interests', no evidence of *servicing* 'self interests' emerged for the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 1, **structure of customer focus**.

Worker talk of customer focus in a process sense pertained to

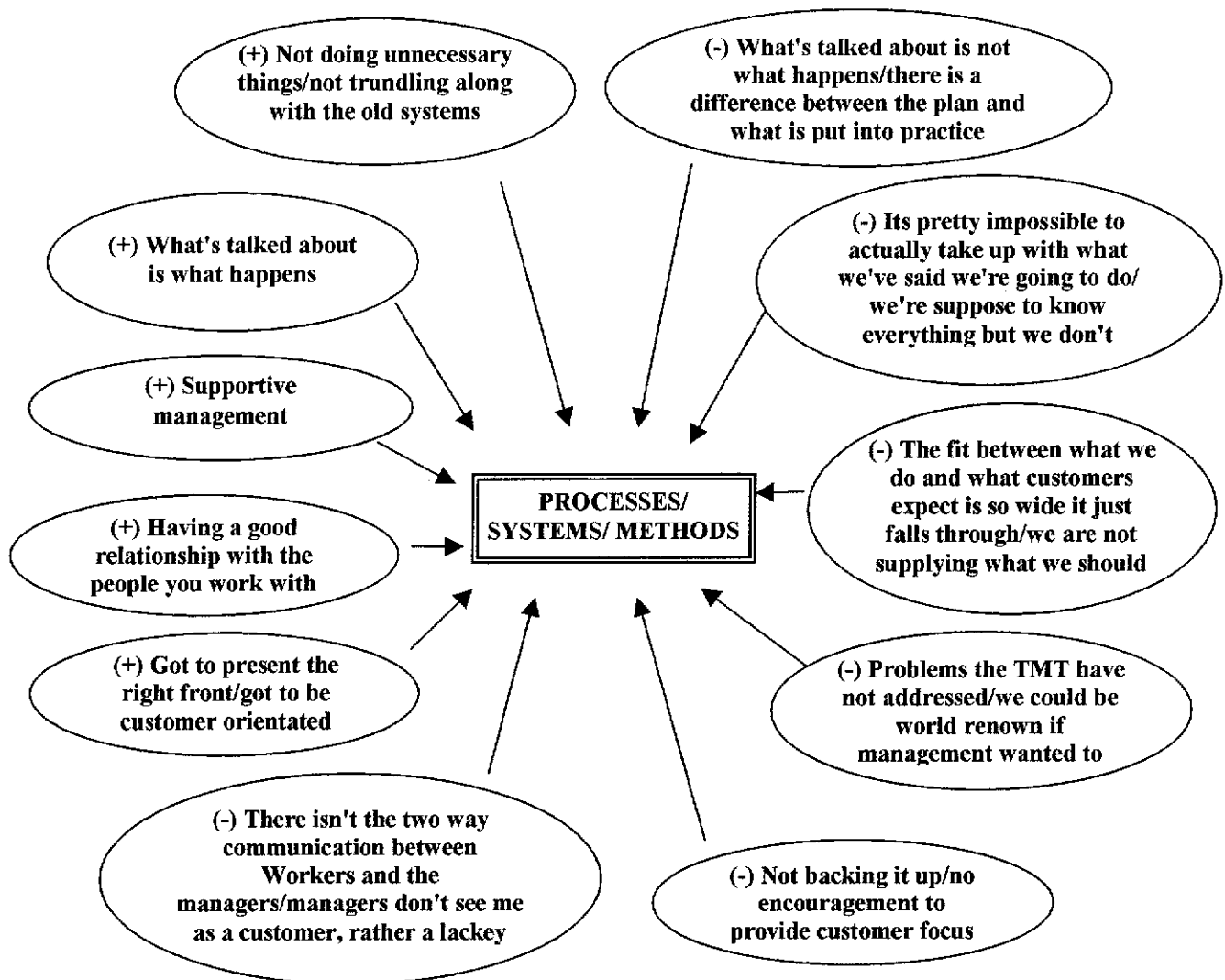
- 'social' actions that *serviced* 'others' interests';
and
- actions that *serviced* 'self interests'.

The themes of 'others' interests' and 'social' were reinforced across the Worker data under a number of categories and sub categories. As illustrated following, the theme of 'others' interests' was reinforced in terms of a theme under a number of sub categories, while the theme of 'social' was reinforced under sub category labels that, in their own right, expressed a social sentiment. Of interest to the present discussion is understanding of action types associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. Insights into types of action that *service* 'self interests' were gained from conceptualising the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under categories 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, and 7, **finding out about customers**.

Processes/systems/methods under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, emerged as pertaining to six themes. These were labelled 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'barriers/problems', 'threats', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships'. Of the six themes, four were classified as pertaining to 'social' phenomena. That is, 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships' were phenomena explicitly associated with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. In other words, these four themes pertained to 'social' elements of organising.

The four social themes for *processes/systems/methods* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers** clustered into two groups. The 'non commitment' and 'poor relationships' themes conveyed a different sense of 'social' as did the 'commitment' and 'relationships' themes. 'Non commitment' and 'poor relationships' were related in the sense that they were constraints to social relations while 'commitment' and 'relationships' were related in the sense they helped create social relations. Properties of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, are detailed in Map 5.23. Indicated in Map 5.23 are the themes to which ideas grouped under the properties pertained, designated as (+) for the 'creating' and (-) for the 'constraining'.

MAP 5.23: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Processes/Systems/ Methods Under the Our Understanding Of Ourselves As Providers Category



A relationship emerged between the *processes/systems/methods* themes of 'constraining' and 'creating' with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. 'Constraining' social relations emerged as being related to *servicing* 'self interests'. 'Creating' social relations emerged as being related to *servicing* 'others' interests'. The data reinforced the finding that customer focus did not only pertain to 'social' actions that *service* 'others' interests'. It also indicated that in certain contexts, actions that *serviced* 'self interests' were also of a 'social' nature. In other words, actions that *serviced* 'others' interests' and actions that *serviced* 'self interests' both pertained to 'social' relations. Although related, 'social' actions that *service* 'others' interests' were different from 'social' actions that *service* 'self interests'.

Building upon Worker talk of customer focus in a process sense described above was a relationship between 'constraining' and 'creating' social relations and *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. Workers were saying customer focus pertained to either:

- 'constraining' social relations that *service* 'self interests';
or
- 'creating' social relations that *service* 'others' interests'.

Emerging in support of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to 'social' phenomena, were responses grouped under sub categories that in their own right expressed a 'social' sentiment. Individually, these sub categories were minimally represented, however when classified collectively, emerged as important. Sub categories expressing a 'social' sentiment in their own right included:

- *involvement* under categories 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**;
- *involvement and commitment* under category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**;
- *communication and relationships* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**;
- *communication and building relationships* under category 7, **finding out about customers**; and
- *relationships* under category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**.

Involvement under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, conveyed customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to consultation and communication. *Involvement* was directly associated with *commitment* in the sub category labelled *involvement and commitment* under category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The phenomenon was grouped under different categories depending upon the context for consultation and communication. Under category 3, *involvement* was associated with consultation and communication with customers. Under category 2, *involvement* was associated with systems and methods of consultation and communication. Under category 8, *involvement and commitment* was associated with staff.

Involvement and commitment under category 8 weakly supported the notion of consultation and communication as **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The notion of *commitment* was linked with *involvement* in the sense that being involved with implementation of the customer focus strategy led to people having the right intentions. This sense was strongly conveyed by the property *I've been involved quite extensively/having the right intentions* and *Workers are the ones actually implementing what the TMT come out with*.

Involvement under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, was conveyed in a positive sense. This was explicitly illustrated under the property *we depend on our customers*. In other words, customer *involvement* was viewed as an important element to the customer focus phenomenon.

Collectively, the data reinforced the notion of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to phenomena of a 'social' nature.

The *involvement* sub category under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, associated the more underlying meanings for *involvement* with the phenomenon of *servicing*. In certain contexts, *involvement* was expressed in terms of *informing* and *enlightening customers*. In other contexts, *involvement* was expressed in terms of *getting across* and *pushing customers along*. Further still, *involvement* was expressed in terms of *gaining customer confidence*. The different meanings for *involvement* across the different contexts were classified as pertaining to two themes. These themes conveyed a sense of *involvement* from either 'self interests' or 'others' interest'.

Involvement in terms of *informing* and *enlightening customers*, and *gaining customer confidence* conveyed a sense of 'others' interests'. Responses conveyed a sense of 'others' interests' as *involvement* was from a frame of reference primarily concerned with customer interests. *Involvement* in terms of *getting across* and *pushing customers along* conveyed a sense of 'self interests'. Responses conveyed a sense of 'self interests' as *involvement* was from a frame of reference primarily concerned with organisational interests. The finding reinforced the argument for customer focus in a process sense from Workers' points of view as principally pertaining to 'social' relation phenomena that *service* either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'.

Communication emerged as a further 'social' action associated with customer focus in a process sense. The phenomenon emerged as a sub category in its own right.

Communication was directly linked with the phenomenon of *relationships* under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. It was also directly linked with the phenomenon of *building relationships* under category 7, **finding out about customers**.

Under category 3, the *communication and relationships* sub category emerged as an important element in facilitating **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. Properties grouped under the sub category conveyed positive and negative evaluations. Positive evaluations were associated with dimensions under the property *we do have good relationships with our customers at our level*. Negative evaluations were associated with dimensions grouped under the property *poor communication between us and the customer*. Responses conveying positive and negative sentiments were represented equally across the data. This suggested Worker perceptions of *communication and relationships* with customers were either positive or negative, depending upon the context in which the *communication and relationships* were located. A relationship existed between the themes of 'constraining' and 'creating' 'social' relations, and the negative and positive evaluations conveyed by responses grouped under *communication and relationships*. Responses grouped under 'constraining' 'social' relations were related to responses conveying negative evaluations under *communication and relationships*. Similarly, responses grouped under 'creating' 'social' relations were related to responses conveying positive evaluations under *communication and relationships*.

Under category 7, the *communication and building relationships* sub category was associated with positive evaluations. In other words, a positive evaluation was associated with having *good communication and relationships* with customers. This positive sentiment was conveyed by responses grouped under the properties labelled *the communication thing/the two way thing* and *give and take relationship/working more effectively because you have good rapport*. The data suggested *communication and building relationships* as an important element in **finding out about customers**. As with the *communication and relationships* sub category above, responses conveying positive evaluations were related to responses grouped under the theme of 'creating' 'social' relations.

Further evidence associating customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to 'creating' and 'constraining' 'social' relations which *service* in the sense of 'others' interests' and 'self interests', was the sub category *relationships* under category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. Although category 8 was

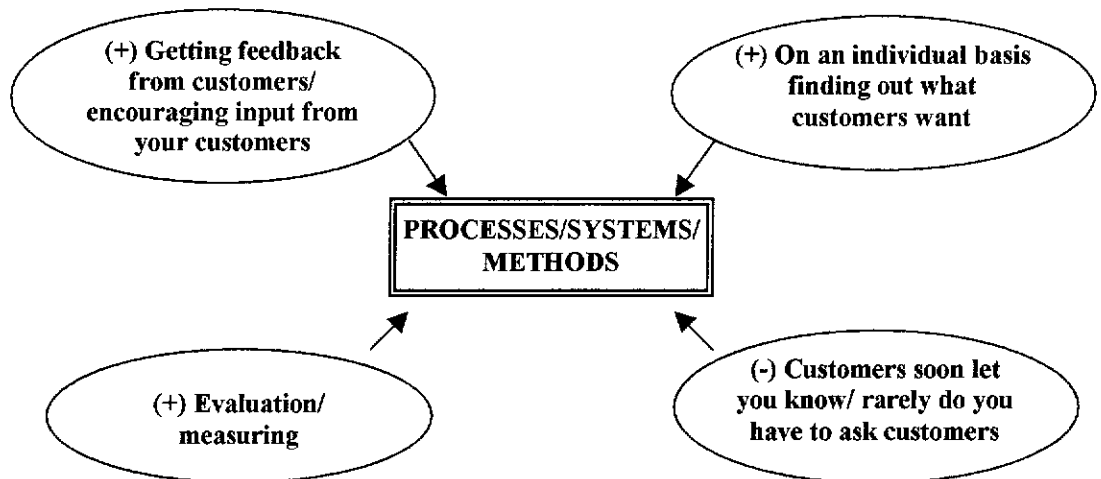
restricted to responses on internal organisational factors, a strong 'social' sense to organising emerged from the properties in terms of *relationships*. Properties under the *relationships* sub category emerged as pertaining to the three themes, labelled 'non evaluative', 'positive' and 'negative'. The 'non evaluative' theme included responses grouped under the property *having the complete organisation/the dynamic thing*. The 'positive' theme included responses grouped under the property *TMT are customer focused towards staff*. The 'negative' theme included responses grouped under the property *TMT are not customer focused towards staff/there's a total lack of confidence in the TMT*. Responses grouped under the 'positive' theme were associated with 'creating' 'social' relations while responses grouped under the 'negative' theme were associated with 'constraining' 'social' relations.

Building upon the finding of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to 'constraining' and 'creating' social relations were responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 7, **finding out about customers**. *Processes/systems/ methods* under category 7 emerged as pertaining to both 'technical' and 'social' aspects of organising. The 'technical' sense was conveyed across the property labelled *evaluation/measuring*. *Evaluation/measuring* grouped responses pertaining to actions of a quantitative nature. The 'social' sense was conveyed across the remaining three properties, *getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers, on an individual basis finding out what customers want* and *customers soon let you know/rarely do you have to ask customers*.

Responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 7, **finding out about customers**, were classified under two themes, labelled 'pro-active' and 'reactive'. The 'pro-active' theme included all responses categorised as pertaining to technical organisational phenomena, plus the 'social' properties *getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers* and *on an individual basis finding out what customers want*. The data conveyed a sense of 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* in that dimensions pertained to actions that respondents actively undertook by themselves. The 'reactive' theme was generated from data grouped under the property classified as pertaining to the social organisational phenomenon *customers soon let you know/rarely do you have to ask customers*. The data conveyed a sense of 'reactive' *processes/systems/methods* in that the dimensions pertained to actions initiated by customers. Properties grounding the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 7, **finding out about customers**, is detailed in Map 5.24. Indicated in Map 5.24 are the themes to which

ideas grouped under the properties pertained, designated as (+) for 'pro-active' and (-) for 'reactive'.

MAP 5.24: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Processes/Systems/Methods Under the Finding Out About Customers Category



Across the Worker data, both 'social' and 'technical' aspects of organisational functioning emerged as phenomenon influencing customer focus. 'Social' phenomena were substantially more supported and represented across the data. In other words, 'social' relations emerged as a robust factor that either 'constrained' or 'created' customer focus. An association was formed between 'social' relations in the sense of 'constraining' and 'creating', and 'reactive' and 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* in the sense of **finding out about customers**.

Supporting the argument of process as including both social and technical aspects to organisational functioning were responses grouped under the sub category *standards/performance indicators* under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. The sub category title suggested a technical interest in organising to the extent that *standards/performance indicators* implied an element of measuring. However, analysis of dimensions grouped under the property indicated *standards/performance indicators* also pertained to qualitative phenomenon, including *person to person contact, being friendly, being an approachable person* and *creating a good image for our customers*.

While *standards/performance indicators* emerged as including both quantitative and qualitative techniques of process, Workers were also saying that the quantitative requirements placed upon them by Top Management Teams were negative. This

indicated that while Workers talk about customer focus in a *standards/performance indicators* context as measuring service delivery, *standards/performance indicators* imposed upon them by Top Management Teams were said to be *ridiculous standards*. The sense gained was that technical *standards/performance indicators* were perceived to be of less importance than 'social' standards of a qualitative nature.

Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to 'creating' and 'constraining' social relations that *service* 'others' interests' and 'self interests' respectively, were *processes/systems/methods* conveying a 'pro-active' and 'reactive' sense.

- 'Pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with 'creating' social relations that *service* 'others' interests'.
- 'Reactive' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with 'constraining' social relations that *service* 'self interests'.

Reinforcing the argument for customer focus in a process sense as being associated with 'creating' and 'constraining' social relations that *service* 'others' interests' and 'self interests' respectively, were responses grouped under the label of *change*. *Change* emerged from the Worker data as being associated with customer focus in both a structure and process sense. The former association has been discussed under the structure of customer focus analysis. It is the latter association that is of interest to the current discussion.

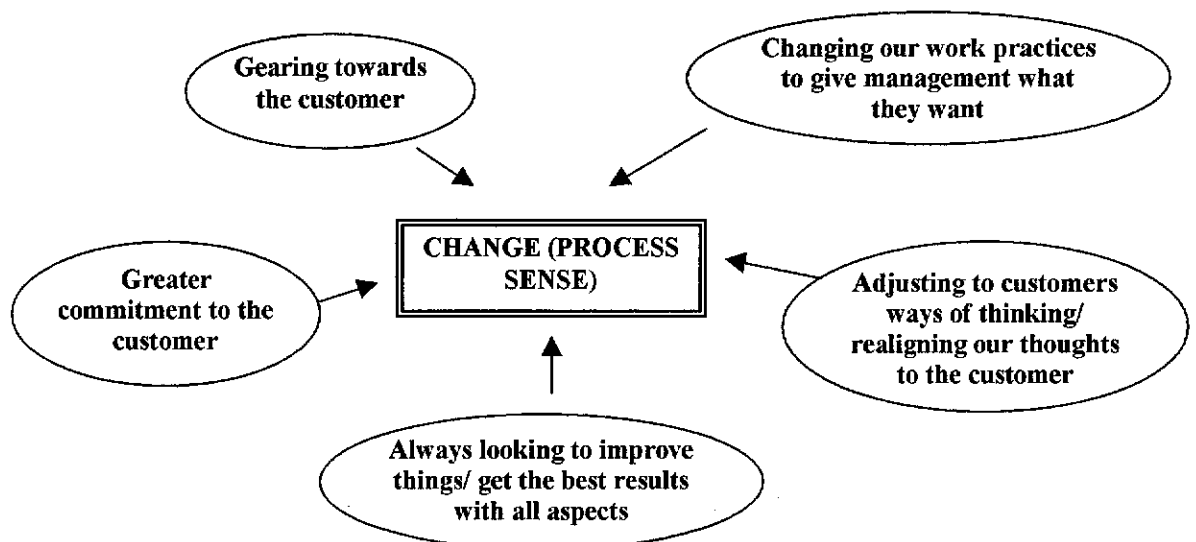
Change was associated with customer focus in a process sense under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, and category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Under category 2, *change* was represented by the property *always looking to improve things/get the best results with all aspects*. Responses grouped under the property associated *change* with action in the sense of *improving* and *getting the best results*. Insights into the meaning for *change* were gained from analysis of the dimensions to the property. Dimensions of the property included *figure out why people come here*, *what do they want* and *ultimately I think the organisation has to give the front line to the people*. These responses implied *change* as pertaining to 'social' action in the sense of relationships between individuals. For example, *figuring out why people come here* and *giving to the front line* implied *change* as pertaining to 'creating' understanding between individuals.

The underlying meaning of *change* in a 'social' process sense was revealed more explicitly under the property *greater commitment to the customer*. Worker responses specifically associated customer focus with 'social' action by suggesting to act in a customer focused way required individuals to *commit* to actions requested by customers. In other words, *change* was achieved through understanding of customer needs and expectations.

Change as conveyed by the properties *gearing towards customer focus/changing ways of doing things* and *changing our work practices to give management what they want* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**, further strengthened the argument of customer focus in a process sense as meaning 'creating' understanding. This 'social' sense to a *change* in terms of 'creating' understanding was made explicit by dimensions grouped under the properties. These included *what does the customer need, how can we meet that need rather than resorting to the rules and regulations* and *over the years, the management focus has also changed*. *Change* in these contexts conveyed a sentiment of realigning the 'social' relations between service providers and customers. More specifically, the *change* was from one of 'constraining' 'self interests' (in the sense of *rules and regulations*) to 'creating' 'others' interests' (in the sense of *management focus*). Properties grounding the notion of *change* in a process sense are detailed in Map 5.25.

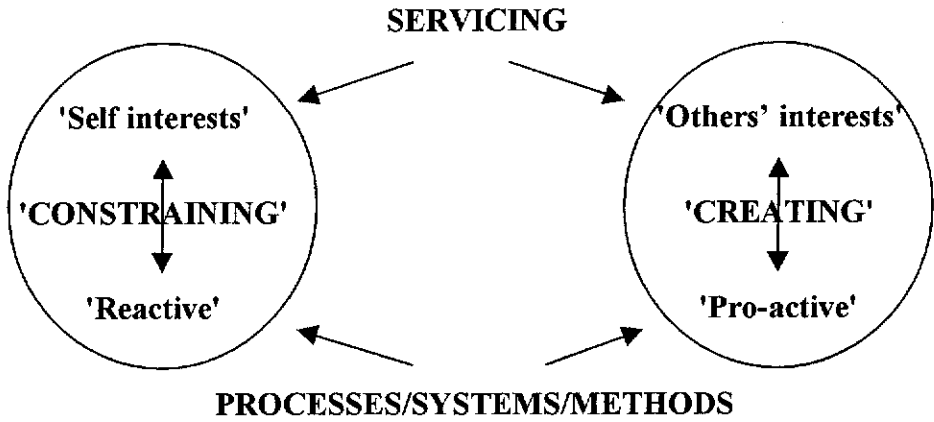
MAP 5.25: Worker Properties Grounding the Notion of Change in a Process Sense



Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to *processes/systems/methods* were Worker responses on the phenomenon of *change*. While the data associated *change* with both *mindsets/attitudes* and *servicing*, in the latter context, there was moderate support suggesting customer focus had resulted in a *change* in organisational processes. *Change*, as indicated by the data, referred to 'creating' understanding. Understanding in this context meant realigning 'social' relations from *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' to *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'.

The relationships amongst the emergent themes for customer focus as pertaining to process are depicted in Figure 5.10.

FIGURE 5.10: Meaning of Customer Focus in a Process Sense as Talked About by Workers



INTERACTION OF THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS THEMES

Classification of the categorised data indicated Workers think about customer focus in terms of structure and process. The classified data in terms of structure and process emerged as strongly relational. This relationship provided a frame of reference for constructing customer focus as received in practice by Workers. In other words, the interaction of structure and process surfaced the more underlying meanings towards the customer focus phenomenon.

In a structural sense, customer focus pertained to two attitudes termed 'closed' and 'open'.

- 'Closed attitudes' were associated with 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* and an organisational *purpose and role* that was both 'not shared' and 'talked about'.
- 'Open attitudes' were associated with 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* and an organisational *purpose and role* that was concerned with 'balancing interests'.

In a process sense, customer focus pertained to two social relationship types termed 'constraining' and 'creating'.

- 'Constraining' social relationships were associated with *servicing* 'self interests' and 'reactive' *processes/systems/methods*.
- 'Creating' social relationships were associated with *servicing* 'others' interests' and 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods*.

The relationship between structure and process conveyed a sense of customer focus from Workers' points of view as pertaining to two broad themes:

- 'closed attitudes' and 'constraining' social relationships.
- 'open attitudes' and 'creating' social relationships.

What therefore was the Worker received practice embedded within these broad themes?

Interpretation of Workers' received practice was made by grounding the categorised data back within the findings generated from analysis at the classification phase. In other words, Workers received practice was constructed by grounding the content of responses within the two emergent broad themes of 'closed attitudes and constraining social relationships' and 'open attitudes and creating social relationships'.

A summary of sentiments conveyed by Worker responses against themes emerged from classification of the data is detailed in Table 5.5. Table 5.5 includes code references for category, sub category and property labels comprising the two broad themes of 'closed attitudes and constraining social relationships' and 'open attitudes and creating social relationships'. Each row in the Table represents a line of analysis as argued under the classification phase. For each row of analysis, an interpretation is provided of the underlying meanings as conveyed by the data.

TABLE 5.5: Interpretation of the Meanings Conveyed by Worker Responses Against the Two Major Themes Identified from Analysis of the Data at the Classification Phase.

Code	Category	Sub category	Property	closed attitudes and constraining relationships	Theme open attitudes and creating relationships	Interpretation from categorised responses
1	2 Attitudes towards customers	Mindsets/attitudes		Negative	Positive	Individuals possess one of two types of mindsets/attitudes.
1	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Purpose and role		Not shared. Talked about	Balancing interests	Individuals hold one of two views on organisations' purpose and role.
1 & 3	3 Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	Customer awareness		Negative	Positive	Worker perceptions of customer awareness in terms of their understanding of service providers reflects one of two types of sentiments held about customers. Worker talk on perceptions of customer awareness is substantially more of the negative type.
1 & 2	2 Attitudes towards customers	Customer awareness		Closed attitude	Open attitude	Worker talk conveying a sentiment of customer awareness reflects one of two types of attitudes towards customers. Worker talk of customer awareness is substantially more of the open attitude type.
4	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Change	Changing the attitude/getting away from the old style mentality of look there's the rules			To become customer focused requires changing the mindsets/attitudes individuals possess from the negative to the positive. Worker talk of change suggested mindsets/ attitudes to have not changed.
6			The cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second			
	2 Attitudes towards customers	Commitment to change	Changing our focus			To become customer focused requires changing individuals' views of purpose and role from the not shared and talked about to the balancing interests.

TABLE 5.5: (Cont.)

5	2 Attitudes towards customers	Commitment to change	Adjusting to the customer's way of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer			Customer focus requires individuals acting the open attitude out in practice.
1 & 2	1 Structure of customer focus	Servicing		Self interests	Others' interests	Individuals act to service one of two types of interests. Worker talk on servicing is substantially more of the others' interests type.
1 & 3	1 Structure of customer focus	Service types		Self interests	Others' interests	Service types convey sentiments of servicing in the sense of either self interests or others' interests. Worker talk of service types substantially conveys a sentiment of servicing self interests.
1	1 Structure of customer focus	Processes/systems/ methods			Others' interests Social	Individuals act to service others' interests via social actions
1, 3 & 6	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Processes/systems/ methods		Non commitment Poor relationships	Commitment Relationships	Individuals social actions service one of two types of interests. Constraining social actions service self interests while creating social actions service others' interests. Worker talk of process is substantially more of the constraining social action type.
1 & 2	2 Attitudes towards customers	Involvement			Positive	Worker talk on process includes various techniques pertaining to the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work.
1	3 Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	Involvement		Self interests	Others' interests	Collectively these techniques are strongly supported. Individuals; social actions convey one of two types of evaluation.
1, 2 & 3	8 Organisational factors impacting on customer focus	Communication and relationships		Negative	Positive	Individuals' social actions service one of two types of interests. Worker talk on social process conveys a mix of positive and negative sentiments.
1, 2 & 3		Involvement and commitment				
1 & 2	7 Finding out about customers	Relationships		Negative	Positive	
1 & 2		Communication and building relationships			Positive	

TABLE 5.5: (Cont.)

1 & 2	7 Finding out about customers	Processes/systems/ methods		Reactive	Pro-active	Worker talk on process includes technical and social techniques that collectively convey sentiments as being one of two types. Worker talk of process is substantially more of a social type conveying pro-active sentiments.
3	1 Structure of customer focus	Standards and performance indicators				Process of customer focus includes technical standards and performance indicators. Technical standards imposed by Top Management Teams are viewed negatively, for example ridiculous standards.
5	2 Attitudes towards customers	Commitment to change	Greater commitment to the customer			To act in a customer focus way requires commitment that is achieved through understanding of customer needs and expectations.
5			Always looking to improve things/get the best results with all aspects			Improving things and getting the best results involves social actions that create understanding amongst individuals.
5	4 Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Change	Gearing towards the customer/changing ways of doing things			Change means creating understanding through realigning the social relations between service providers and customers.
5			Changing our work practices to give management what they want			To become customer focused requires changing from constraining relations that service self interests to creating relations that service others' interests.

Interpretation of Worker customer focus received practice as created from their talk emerged as pertaining to six central arguments. Evidence supporting the six central arguments is indicated in Table 5.5 by the respective code references.

1. Customer focus means thinking and acting in 'positive' ways

Worker talk on customer focus was associated with two different ways of thinking and acting. In both a structure and process sense, customer focus is associated with either:

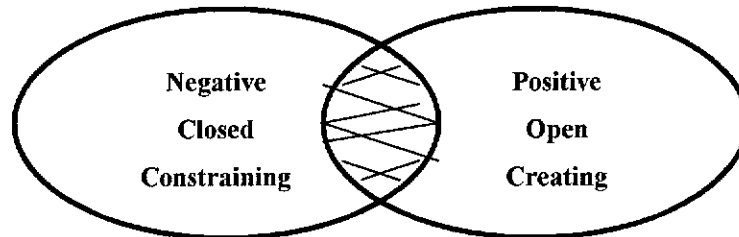
- 'negative' ways of thinking and acting (referred to as *bureaucratic/public service mentality*);
- or
- 'positive' ways of thinking and acting (referred to as *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do*).

While there was an association between thinking and acting in 'negative' and 'positive' ways, customer focus was strongly aligned with thinking and acting in the 'positive' sense. This 'positive' way of thinking was conveyed as an 'open attitude', underpinned by a 'positive' *mindset/attitude* that was aligned with organisations' *purpose and role* in terms of 'balancing interests'. The 'positive' way of acting was conveyed as a 'creating' approach which meant *servicing* 'others' interests' by way of 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods*. *Servicing* 'others' interests' meant to provide service delivery in context with customer expectations or needs. 'Pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* included 'commitment' and 'relationships'.

Opposing the customer focus way of thinking and acting were responses that conveyed a sentiment of 'negative' ways. The 'negative' approach emerged as pertaining to a 'closed attitude', underpinned by a 'negative' *mindset/attitude* that was aligned with organisations' *purpose and role* in terms of 'not shared' and 'talked about'. The 'negative' process meant *servicing* 'self interests' by way of 'reactive', 'constraining' *processes/systems/methods*. *Servicing* 'self interests' meant doing a job. No relationship was made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. In other words, *servicing* 'self interests' pertained to what Workers perceived as the role or task they were required to perform from an organisational perspective. 'Reactive' *processes/systems/methods* included 'non commitment' and 'poor relationships'.

The premises taken by Workers for the meaning of customer focus are depicted in Figure 5.11. Figure 5.11, along with Figures 5.12, 5.13 and 5.14, take the role as building blocks for creating the received practice upon which conclusions on the premise-to-received practice relationship are formulated (see Figure 7.1)

FIGURE 5.11: Worker Customer Focus Premises Taken



2. Talk of the 'positive' conveys sentiments of the 'positive'

Support for Worker talk on customer focus as pertaining to thinking and acting in a 'positive' sense were instances of Workers actually thinking and acting in a 'positive' way. These instances were explicitly conveyed by responses grouped under a number of categories as detailed following.

Under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**, Worker talk on *customer awareness* emerged as pertaining to two types of attitudes termed 'closed attitudes' and 'open attitudes'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *customer awareness* were substantially more of the 'open attitude' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *customer awareness* conveyed sentiments of an 'open attitude' in practice.

Under category 1, **structure of customer focus**, Worker talk on *servicing* emerged as pertaining to two types of interests termed 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *servicing* were substantially more of the 'others' interests' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *servicing* conveyed sentiments of 'others' interests' in practice.

Under categories 2, 3, 7 and 8, Worker talk on processes associated with customer focus emerged as pertaining to *involvement*, *communication*, *relationships* and *commitment*. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *involvement*,

communication, relationships and *commitment* conveyed 'positive' evaluations. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about customer focus in a process sense conveyed 'positive' sentiments in practice. Examples of words used by Workers that conveyed the 'positive' approach in-use included:

I've been involved quite extensively // we do have good relationships with our customers at our level // working more effectively because you have good rapport // TMT are customer focused towards staff.

Further evidence of Workers thinking and acting in the 'positive' way was conveyed in responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 7, **finding out about customers**. Worker talk on *processes/systems/methods* in **finding out about customers** included both technical and social techniques. These techniques collectively conveyed a sense of being either 'pro-active' or 'reactive'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about processes in **finding out about customers** were substantially more of the 'pro-active' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about **finding out about customers** conveyed sentiments of 'pro-active' processes in practice.

In summary, the action of talk indicated that not only do Workers talk about customer focus as thinking and acting in 'positive' ways, but that they also did think and act in the 'positive' way. In other words, there was evidence across the data that Workers were actually thinking and acting in 'positive' ways. Counter to these positive sentiments was strong evidence indicating that Workers were thinking and acting in 'negative' ways. This evidence is presented under central argument 3.

3. Talk of the 'positive' conveys sentiments of the 'negative'

While talk on customer focus meant thinking and acting in a 'positive' way, the language in-use of Workers strongly indicated 'negative' ways of thinking and acting in practice. **In other words, the 'negative' was received in practice by Workers from Top Management Teams.** Evidence for the 'negative' sentiments were conveyed by responses grouped under a number of categories as detailed following.

Under category 3, **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, Worker talk on *customer awareness* grouped responses concerned with perceived customer attitudes, knowledge, and understanding, towards themselves. These perceived customer attitudes, knowledge, and understanding reflected two types of attitudes termed 'closed' and 'open'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *customer*

awareness included substantially more 'negative' sentiments about customers. Illustrative responses conveying 'negative' sentiments about customers included:

Management view my job as unimportant // it's a job a trained monkey could do // customers come to see what they in their own mind want to see // customers are not interested in what we do // customers want to do their own thing.

'Negative' sentiments about customers reflected a 'closed attitude' in terms of *customer awareness*. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *customer awareness* conveyed sentiments of a 'closed attitude' in practice.

As with the *servicing* sub category under category 1, **structure of customer focus**, Worker talk on *service types* (under category 1) emerged as pertaining to two types of interests termed 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. While Workers talked substantially more about *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests' (see under central argument 2 above), the talk of *service types* was substantially more about *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. That is, while Workers talk about *servicing* as meaning the performance of a job or task in context with customer expectations or needs, *service types* were expressed in a way that conveyed a strong sense of doing a job or task. The data indicated that while Workers articulate a sense of customer focus as pertaining to servicing 'others' interests', this did not translate into words at the level of action. Rather, Workers talked about jobs or tasks actually performed using words that indicated *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'.

The strongest evidence indicating Worker practice to be substantially more of the 'negative' way were responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Worker talk on *processes/systems/methods* emerged as pertaining principally to social actions. These social actions were talked about as impacting on relationships in one of two ways, either 'constraining' or 'creating'. 'Constraining' actions on relationships conveyed a sense of *servicing* 'self interests' under the themes of 'poor relationships' and 'non commitment'. 'Creating' actions on relationships conveyed a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests' under the themes of 'relationships' and 'commitment'. In the talk of Workers, while processes pertaining to social aspects of organising included *relationships, communication, involvement* and *commitment*, words used to describe current organisational processes were substantially in a sense of *poor relationships* and *non commitment*. That is, the language in-use of Workers in

talking about organisational processes conveyed strong sentiments of 'constraining' relationships in practice.

Illustration of 'constraining' relationships in practice were provided by responses grouped under the properties *not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus* and *there isn't the two-way communication between the Workers and the managers/managers don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey*. These two properties emerged as the most important under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 4. *Not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus* conveyed strong sentiments of 'non commitment' in practice. *There isn't the two-way communication between the Workers and the managers/managers don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey* conveyed strong sentiments of 'poor relationships' in practice.

Another way of perceiving the sentiments conveyed under talk of 'constraining' relationships under the 'negative' approach is in terms of equivocality. Opposing sentiments of equivocality conveyed under the 'negative' way, is a sense of shared understanding conveyed in Worker talk of the 'positive' approach. The notions of equivocality and understanding are further explored under central arguments 5 and 6 following.

The property *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what's put into practice*, also under *processes/systems/methods* under category 4, provided further evidence of Worker received practice as being 'negative' ways of thinking and acting. Responses grouped under the property illustrated the meaning of customer focus in two ways. First, customer focus meant more than just talk - it also required action. This assertion is grounded in context of customer focus in a 'negative' structural sense of 'closed attitudes' as pertaining to the themes of 'not shared' and 'talked about'. Second, Worker talk indicated a difference between what is said is done and what is actually done. For example, while processes pertaining to social aspects of organising included *commitment*, current organisational processes were talked about substantially more in a sense of *non commitment*. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about organisational processes conveyed strong sentiments of 'constraining' relationships in practice.

Further evidence of Workers thinking and acting in the 'negative' way in the sense of 'constraining' relationships was conveyed by words used by Workers in talking about *communication and relationships* under category 3, **customer understanding of**

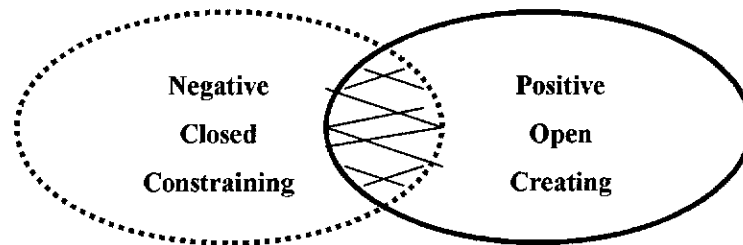
ourselves as providers, and relationships under category 8, organisational factors impacting on customer focus.

Under category 3, Worker talk on *communication and relationships* emerged as pertaining to one of two types termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *communication and relationships* were substantially more of the 'negative' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *communication and relationships* conveyed strong sentiments of the 'negative' type in practice. This sentiment was strongly conveyed under the property *we do not have good relationships with our customers at our level*.

Under category 8, Worker talk on *relationships* emerged as pertaining to one of two types termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *relationships* were substantially more of the 'negative' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *relationships* conveyed strong sentiments of the 'negative' type in practice. This sentiment was strongly conveyed by the property *TMT are not customer focused towards staff/there's a total lack of confidence in the TMT*.

A final point of importance providing evidence of Workers thinking and acting in the 'negative' way were responses grouped under *standards/performance indicators* under category 1, **structure of customer focus**. As discussed during the classification phase, properties and dimensions grouped under the sub category pertained to both quantitative and qualitative processes. In regards to quantitative *standards/performance indicators*, Workers talked of the requirements placed upon them by Top Management Team as being *ridiculous standards*. The sense gained was that the technical *standards/performance indicators* required by Top Management Teams were perceived by Workers as being of little relevance. Worker received practice as created in their language in-use is depicted Figure 5.12.

FIGURE 5.12: Worker Customer Focus Received in Practice



..... Talk elements that are received in practice

4. Talk of the 'positive' requires change

The strong representation and support for the 'negative' and 'positive' in Worker talk was made meaningful in context of *change*. Talk of 'closed attitudes and constraining relationships' (the 'negative') and 'open attitudes and creating relationships' (the 'positive') grounded the notion of *change*. In Worker talk, 'open attitudes and creating relationships' were a *change* from 'closed attitudes and constraining relationships'. In other words, the 'positive' was achieved by changing the thoughts and actions of individuals.

More explicitly, a *change* in thoughts required changing:

- *mindsets/attitudes* from the 'negative' to the 'positive';
and
- perceptions of organisations' *purpose and role* from the 'not shared' and 'talked about' to the 'balancing interests'.

A *change* in actions required changing:

- 'constraining' relationships that *service* 'self interests' to 'creating' relationships that *service* 'others' interests'.

Although clear distinctions emerged between elements of the 'negative' and 'positive' ways, both approaches were talked about as being concerned with 'social' relationships. In other words, customer focus was perceived from Worker points of view as pertaining to different 'social' ways of thinking and acting.

5. Change is shorthand for creating understanding

Worker talk on the 'positive' as requiring a *change* in individuals' thoughts and actions provided surface meanings to the customer focus phenomenon. What it means to *change* to the 'positive' surfaced the more underlying meanings for customer focus from Workers' points of view.

Worker talk of the 'negative' and 'positive' was concerned with social relationships. Social relationships under the two ways conveyed different sentiments. The difference in sentiments rested in the nature of the social relationships. In terms of process, 'negative' social relationships were talked about as conveying a sense of *servicing* 'self interests', and as being 'reactive' and 'constraining'. Under the 'positive' way, relationships were talked about as conveying a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests', and as being 'pro-active' and 'creating'. Talk of *change* only partly revealed the customer focus story. The action of language used by Workers in talking about *change* surfaced the more underlying meanings in achieving it.

An initial sense for the meaning of *change* was gained from responses grouped under the property *adjusting to the customers way of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer* under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**. Worker talk on *adjusting* and *realigning* pertained to acting out in practice the 'open attitude'. The open attitude, as conveyed by Worker talk, meant 'balancing interests'. Talk of 'balancing interests' conveyed sentiments of understanding in the sense that customer focus required 'balancing' service delivery between 'self' and 'others' interests'. Words spoken by Workers in terms of 'balancing interests' explicitly conveyed sentiments of understanding as indicated in the following responses.

Trying to get the two things working together // being the meat in the sandwich // getting a compromise between the two // having to say 'no' sometimes, you can't please everybody.

Support for the notion of *change* as meaning creating understanding was further strengthened by responses grouped under the sub category *change* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. The notion of understanding emerged from grounding words spoken by Workers in talking about customer focus within talk of *change*.

Change in a process sense under category 4 was represented by two properties, *gearing towards the customer/changing ways of doing things* and *changing our work*

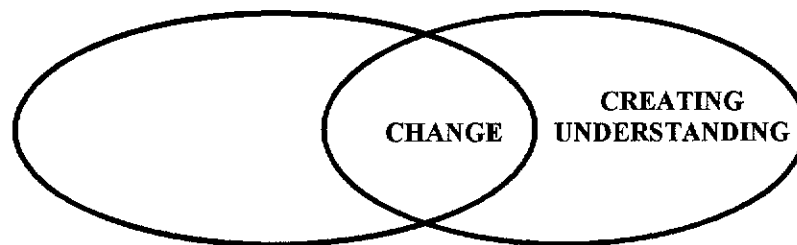
practices to give management what they want. Responses under both properties conveyed *change* as pertaining to a realignment of the social relations between service providers and customers. This realignment was previously discussed as conveying sentiments of understanding in the sense that the 'positive' way meant 'creating' relations between individuals.

'Creating' relations was a *change* from the 'negative' approach. The 'negative', in terms of *purpose and role*, conveyed sentiments about customer focus as being 'not shared' and only 'talked about'. In terms of *processes/systems/methods*, the 'negative' was associated with Worker talk in terms of *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what's put into practice*. Collectively, the themes of 'not shared' and 'talked about', and the language in-use of Workers in terms of *what's talked about is not what happens, there is a difference between the plan and what's put into practice* conveyed a strong sense of equivocality amongst Workers towards customer focus. *Change* to the 'positive' in terms of 'creating' relations implied a process of understanding. In the talk of Workers, understanding is created through *involvement, building relations, communicating and consultation*, with customers.

Support for Worker talk on *change* to mean creating understanding was conveyed by responses imbued with sentiments of equivocality. In other words, equivocality was reduced through 'creating' processes of shared understanding. Sentiments of understanding were conveyed by responses grouped under the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2, **attitudes towards customers**.

Under the property *greater commitment to the customer*, Worker talk indicated that acting in a customer focus way (the 'positive') required *commitment*. *Commitment* was conveyed in a sense that suggested it was achieved through understanding of customer needs and expectations. Under the property *always looking to improve things/get the best result with all aspects*, Worker talk indicated that acting in a customer focus way (the 'positive') required *improving and getting the best*. *Improving and getting the best* was conveyed in a sense that, once again, suggested it was achieved through an understanding of customer needs and expectations. The meaning taken for *change* as enacted by Workers is depicted in Figure 5.13.

FIGURE 5.13: Meaning Taken for Change as Enacted by Workers



6. Talk of creating understanding conveys sentiments of equivocality received in practice

Worker talk on *change* as pertaining to understanding was conveyed by words that projected a sense of equivocality. Evidence of the equivocality was introduced in arguing the case of change as meaning creating understanding under central argument 5 above. Equivocality was also conveyed by responses grouped under the property, *the cultural problem/we come first our customers come second* under category 4, **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. While the property illustrated customer focus as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes*, the action of Worker talk indicated current practice as being more of the 'negative' way. In a structural sense, the 'negative' way was conveyed in terms of 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* and an organisational *purpose and role* that was both 'not shared' and only 'talked about'.

The notion of equivocality emerged in the sense that things 'not shared' and only 'talked about' were associated with a *cultural problem*. In a process sense, the themes of 'not shared' and 'talked about' were associated with 'constraining' relationships, namely 'poor relationships' and 'non commitment'. In essence, the talk of Workers suggested the *cultural problem* resulted from customer focus being 'not shared', 'talked about', 'poor relationships' and 'non commitment'. These elements collectively conveyed equivocality in the sense of a lack of shared meanings on customer focus between Top Management Teams and Workers. **Equivocality was the Worker received practice.**

Sentiments for the received practice as being equivocality were explicitly conveyed by responses grouped under two categories. In both instances, the action of Worker language grounded the notion of received practice as pertaining to a discord in meaning between Top Management Team talked intentions and practiced actions.

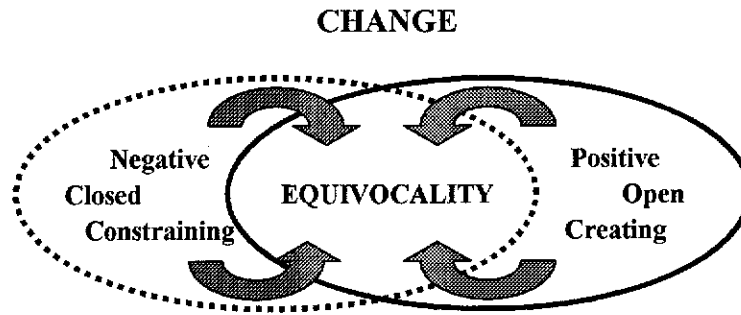
The property *not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus* has been discussed under central argument 3 as conveying strong sentiments of 'non commitment' in practice. The property provided evidence that Workers were thinking and acting in 'negative' ways. The action of Worker language indicated 'constraining' social relationships in practice. In other words, Worker talk of the 'positive' as requiring *change* was conveyed by words conveying equivocal meanings.

While *change* was talked about as meaning creating understanding, Workers also talked of *resources and capacity* as important factors influencing customer focus. *Resources and capacity* emerged under category 8, **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The sub category pertained to technical aspects of organising, principally staff numbers and dollars. Although the category pertained to technical aspects of organising, sentiments conveyed by the words used in talking about *resources and capacity* suggested equivocality between what Top Management Teams expected to be done and what Workers perceived was able to be done.

Worker talk about *resources and capacity* indicated that there were not enough human and physical resources to effect customer focus effectively. The data conveyed a sense of equivocality in that to create understanding Workers talk of limiting *resources and capacity*. In this context, *resources and capacity* were a social fact that contributed to equivocality in that what Workers understood as needing to be done was in practice not able to be done. In other words, equivocality in the form of *resources and capacity* was perceived as a consequence of 'constraining' relationships that blocked understanding between Top Management Teams and Workers.

The meaning of *change* as received in practice by Workers is depicted in Figure 5.14.

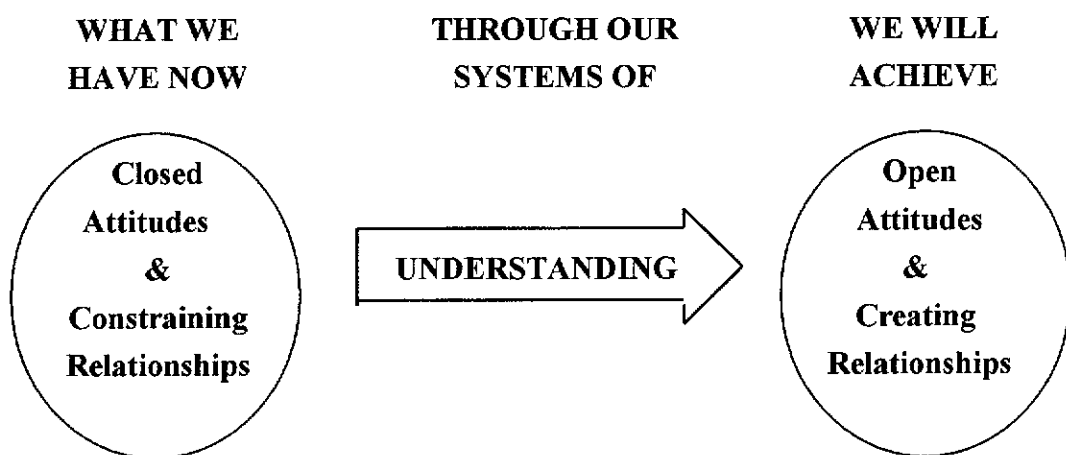
FIGURE 5.14: Meaning for Change as received in practice by Workers



..... Talk elements that are received in practice

In summary, the interaction of the structure and process themes provided insights into Worker underlying meanings for customer focus. Conceptualising the data from the interest of establishing the way Workers operationalise what they think, customer focus emerged as pertaining to the phenomenon of understanding. In other words, the frame of reference for customer focus from the perspective of Workers was centrally concerned with understanding in changing from 'closed attitudes' and 'constricting' relationships to 'open attitudes' and 'creating' relationships. This frame of reference is depicted in Figure 5.15. Substantially, Worker received practice included strong sentiments of equivocality, which was interpreted as a lack of shared meanings on customer focus between Top Management Teams and Workers.

FIGURE 5.15: Worker Frame of Reference for Interpreting Customer Focus



Findings to Phase Two Worker questions

At this point it is relevant to discuss the webs of significance of data collected in response to the Worker phase two questions. The framing of questions for phase two of the Worker interviews was undertaken prior to the analysis of the Top Management Team data.

As reported at the beginning of this Chapter, data generated from the phase two Worker questions provided no further purposeful insights in a hermeneutic (Heidegger, 1978) or grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) sense for this study. However, in opening up further avenues of inquiry, the data illustrated a limitation to the study as argued following.

Of four key phenomena emerging across both data groups (*involvement, commitment, communication and relationships*), two were detailed on cards used in sub section two of the phase two Worker questions (*involvement, relationships*). (Full details of the schedule of questioning for Worker interviews are provided in Appendix 3.) Worker responses strongly indicated that the phenomena of *involvement* and *relationships* do not convey any meaningful images from either a talked or practiced sense. Illustrative thought units generated when presented with the words included:

So they're saying one thing on one hand but in "reality", it's completely different // And the practice is about the same, disappointing I would put it // I've never heard that word before - Involvement/Relationships // I can't say that I can recall anything formal that has been said or written about that // I'm sorry I don't really know what it means // Just two words on a page and I can't relate it to // Nothing in that at all as far as I am concerned // Absolutely appalling. Lack of communication in this agency is appalling. And from my point of view communication is my brick wall, because I bang my head against a brick wall. I can not understand why people do not communicate simple everyday things that could help other people, like a new person starting, what branch they're in, what their extension number will be and they don't tell anybody and then we get calls for this person, "so I say sorry nobody of that name works at the agency" and then you find that they have been here two weeks // They don't want us to be involved and they don't seem to want to recognise any of your experience and knowledge that you have acquired over a life time, which I think is very sad because its denying the individual any kind of dignity that they can contribute something within the working arrangement. It also makes me concerned about the liberty of an individual - denying that they have a mind to think and challenge and then question what's right.

The data indicated that while at the surface *involvement* and *relationships* were substantial elements to customer focus, at the more underlying level of received practice, the phenomena conveyed little or no meaning. In Morgan's (1980:611) view, the metaphors of *involvement* and *relationships* conveyed "nonsensical or weak imagery".

Anecdotal evidence from field observations made at the conclusions of interviews stimulates thinking on further areas of inquiry in understanding the premise-to-received practice relations. A comment recorded was as follows:

People love working for this organisation, yet we automatically think of the negative things. We are given an opportunity to talk about the positive things, yet we think negatively.

Plausibly, given the premise-to-received practice model developed in this study, Worker surface language in-use of "people love working for this organisation" is a metaphorical expression for organising. In other words, "people love working for this organisation" is guided by a more underlying worldview framed by practical interests for the purposes of understanding. This finding is further touched on in posing further areas of inquiry in Chapter seven.

CHAPTER 6: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This Chapter discusses the study's findings in context of the research questions posed in Chapter one.

- i) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Top Management Team enacted premise?
- ii) What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Worker received practice?
- iii) What is the alignment in meanings between the enacted premise and received practice contexts?
- iv) What understandings emerge from the study to assist concerned change agents interested in aligning organisational intentions and actions?

Chapter five emerged answers to the first two questions in grounding meanings held by Top Management Teams and Workers towards customer focus. This Chapter is principally concerned with question three. The discussion compares the first and second order constructs derived from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data at the categorisation and classification phases described in Chapter five. In building the comparison, a sense for the alignment between Top Management Team enacted premise and Worker received practice meanings is constructed.

First, the Chapter signals an unexpected finding arising from analysis of the data. This unexpected finding relates to a contradiction with the study design in context of the assumptions informing design decisions.

Second, a discussion of findings from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data at the 'categorisation' phase is made. The Chapter section compares important phenomena and dominant themes emerging across the two data groups.

Third, a discussion of findings from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data at the 'classification' phase is made. The Chapter section constructs interpretations for important phenomena and dominant themes emerging across the two data groups. This is followed with a discussion summary.

Unexpected finding on the assumptions

This study has been premised on a fundamental assumptions which contextualises the phenomenon of organising. In précis, the root assumptions have been:

- Adopting metaphor for understanding the processes of organising (Morgan, 1980) in the sense of customer focus as the "topic" (Bittner, 1974) of inquiry.
- Accentuating interaction and individuals' relatedness with one another as the location for meaning making and interpretation (Gergen and Thatchenkery, 1996; Barrett, *et al*, 1991).
- Surfacing Top Management Team and Worker created and reproduced realities through symbolic processes of organising (Putnam, 1983); more specifically, the organisational communication systems.
- Organising in the observer perspective is a series of enactment episodes in a stream of experiences.
- Construing enacted premise and received practice as neither separate states of consciousness (Argyris, 1976) nor intra subjective meaning hierarchies (Whiteley, 1997) rather coexisting contexts for meaning making and interpretation.
- Treating all organisational voices as equal.

An unexpected finding on the assumptions emerged from the research design. The unexpected finding was the 'lens' adopted in investigating the processes of organising. Customer focus as the organisational 'paradigm' (Kuhn, 1962) was a phenomenon holding high currency with the language in-use of Top Management Teams. Customer focus was a socially reified construct (Weick, 1969) delivered by the Public Sector Management Officer (PSMO) to Public Sector Agencies. Accordingly, the study inadvertently adopted a technical interest to organising.

Analysis of the data illustrated differences in meaning that individuals attribute to organisational symbols; in this study's case, language. Language, as a symbolic representation of organising, provided meaning that can be used to interpret situations and adjust behaviour. Accordingly, the choice of customer focus as the lens to investigate the premise-to-received practice inadvertently located the processes of organising from a managerial point of view. Studying organising from a managerial point of view was argued in Chapter two as supporting a historical practice of interpreting the interests of the managers as universal (Detert, 2000).

Alternate metaphors for organising emerged from analysis of Worker responses to phase two questions. As reported in Chapter five, a Worker interview surfaced the metaphor "people love working for this organisation". While the study was designed on critical inquiry assumptions, adopting customer focus as the lens for understanding the processes of organising inadvertently emphasised the prevailing interests of management. This unexpected finding is used in posing further areas of inquiry - see Chapter seven.

Discussion of findings from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data at the 'categorisation' phase

This Chapter section compares important phenomena and dominant themes emerging across the two data groups. Major similarities and differences between the Top Management Team and Worker data are identified.

OVERVIEW OF COMPARISON OF DATA GENERATED AT THE CATEGORISATION PHASE

Across the Top Management Team and Worker data, customer focus emerged as pertaining to a number of key categories. Nine categories emerged across the Top Management Team data. Eight categories emerged across the Worker data. The eight categories of the Worker data were replicas of categories emerging from the Top Management Team data. The eight category labels were:

- structure of customer focus;
- attitudes towards customers;
- customer understanding of ourselves as providers;
- our understanding of ourselves as providers;
- perceptions of customer focus;
- customer factors impacting on customer focus;
- finding out about customers; and
- organisational factors impacting on customer focus.

The additional category emerging from the Top Management Team data was:

- elements which need to be balanced.

A comparison of the important phenomena and dominant themes emerging under each category between the two data groups is presented following. As an illustration of density, Appendix 8 lists the number of instances (thought units) comprising categories and sub categories for both data groups.

COMPARISON OF MAJOR PHENOMENA AND DOMINANT THEMES

Responses grouped under each category emerged as pertaining to important phenomena and dominant themes. Dominant themes conveyed sentiments held by Top Management Teams and Workers towards the customer focus phenomenon. Analysis of important phenomena, dominant themes and sentiments conveyed by the themes, between the two data groups is presented following. A comparison is provided for each category.

1. STRUCTURE OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

Structure of customer focus emerged in terms of *servicing* across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Properties and dimensions of the sub category between the two data groups were similar. Across both data groups, *servicing* emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. *Servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' conveyed the meaning of doing a job or task. No relationship was made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. In contrast, *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests' was generated from responses associating service delivery with customer expectations or needs. Across both data groups, words spoken in talking about *servicing* were substantially more of the 'others' interests' type.

A distinction between Top Management Team and Worker responses on *servicing* concerned sentiments conveyed by the words used in talking about the phenomenon. Workers talked about *servicing* in the terms of *helping*, *assisting*, *looking after* and *supporting*. In contrast, Top Management Teams talked about *servicing* in the sense of a *need*.

Service types emerged as a plethora of responses across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Responses grouped under the sub category across both data groups were similar to the extent they conveyed similar themes. Service types across both the Top Management Team and Worker data differed in their dimensions along a continuum from *performing a task/role* to a *value-added experience*. The

dimensions conveyed a sense of *servicing* from either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'. This finding emerged more strongly across the Worker data under the property *what customers need from us/people come here for different reasons*. This *service type* property conveyed a sense of *servicing* 'others' interests' in that Workers talked about the things they did from a perceived customer point of view. The different senses of 'interests' for *servicing* were made meaningful in the context of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category - see discussion following.

Standards and performance indicators also emerged as a plethora of responses across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. For both data groups, a *various* property comprised of numerous dimensions emerged which illustrated the wide range of *standards and performance indicators* applied by participating organisations. Dimensions of the property varied along a continuum from more technical, quantitative *standards and performance indicators* to more social, qualitative ones.

Across both data groups, negative evaluations were associated with a number of *standards and performance indicators*. *Standards and performance indicators* conveying negative evaluations across the Top Management Team data were referred to as *quick fix, Mickey mouse, low level things*, while for Workers they were referred to as *ridiculous standards*. Both the *quick fix, Mickey mouse, low level things* and the *ridiculous standards* pertained to more technical, quantitative *standards and performance indicators* that were imposed upon respondents by individuals to whom they had a reporting responsibility and accountability. Individuals to whom Top Management Team had a reporting responsibility and accountability were *PSMO and government*. For Workers, it was the Top Management Teams to whom they had a reporting responsibility and accountability.

An additional property emerging from the Worker data was labelled *meeting our commitments to customers/don't lie to customers*. This property was distinguished from the one labelled *various* on the basis that responses grouped under it pertained to not only talking *standards and performance indicators* but also doing the *standards and performance indicators*. This property of the Worker data was strongly related to the Top Management Team sub category *words and actions* grouped under the category **elements that need to be balanced**. Although weakly supported, *words and actions* indicated that what organisations say they do differed from what they were perceived to do.

The sub category *processes/systems/methods* emerged as a strong element to **structure of customer focus** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Properties of the Top Management Team data were grouped according to dominant themes labelled 'old' and 'new'. The 'old' theme was comprised of the properties *conservative way, bureaucratic way and autocratic way*. The 'new' theme was comprised of the properties *new ways of responding/value adding and giving more than/enabling customers*. 'Old' *processes/systems/methods* related to *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. 'New' *processes/systems/methods* related to *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'.

Properties of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category across the Worker data conveyed a different meaning. Collectively, all responses were argued as pertaining to social organisational phenomena. The data conveyed a sense of *servicing* in terms of 'others' interests'. This was explicitly illustrated by the properties *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required, interaction with customers/talking to customers and treating people the way you would expect to be treated*. Responses under these properties were similar to responses of Top Management Teams grouped under the theme labelled 'new'. In other words, while Top Management Teams talked about customer focus as pertaining to 'old' and 'new' themes of *processes/systems/ methods*, all Worker responses were associated with what Top Management Teams termed the 'new'. The 'new' conveyed a sense of *servicing* in terms of 'others' interests'.

Properties of the *end results/outcomes* sub category for the **structure of customer focus** category across both the Top Management Team and Worker data pertained to three themes. The themes pertained to an *outcome/end result* for the:

- organisation - the *self* property;
- customers - the *others* property; or
- both customers and the organisation, the *win-win* property.

The sub category was well supported across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across the Top Management Team data, the *win-win* property was the most represented and the *self* property the least represented. In contrast, across the Worker data, the *self* property was the most represented and the *win-win* property the least represented.

Structure of customer focus across both the Top Management Team and Worker data included responses concerning perceptions of an overall *assessment of performance*. Across both data groups, responses were grouped under the labels *positive*, *negative* and *trying to improve*. An additional property emerged from the Worker data indicating respondents were not able to comment on overall performance. *Positive assessments of performance* were more strongly represented than *negative* ones across both data groups.

2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS CUSTOMERS

Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, **attitudes towards customers** emerged as pertaining to *customer awareness*. Properties for the sub category were similar. Across both data groups, properties were categorised according to themes, labelled 'open attitude' and 'closed attitude'.

Responses grouped under properties of the 'closed attitude' conveyed a sense of customer focus as applying to individuals external to organisations. Responses grouped under properties of the 'open attitude' theme conveyed a sense of customer focus as requiring individuals to think about the things they do from the perspective of the customer. This included providing things that customers need or want, rather than simply complying to standard operating rules and procedures. In other words, both the Top Management Team and Worker data conveyed a sense of doing the right things rather than simply doing things right. Across both data groups, responses conveying an 'open attitude' were more strongly supported and represented than responses conveying the 'closed attitude'.

Across both data groups, **attitudes towards customers** was conveyed in terms of *commitment to change*. The sub category pertained to a *commitment* both to *changing* and *improving* existing service delivery practices. Although represented across both data groups, different sentiments were conveyed by properties and dimensions grouped under each sub category.

Top Management Team talk on *commitment to change* conveyed sentiments on both what it means to *change*, and how *change* is achieved. A sense of how *change* is achieved was strongly conveyed by the property *carrying the thinking out*. *Carrying the thinking out* meant acting the 'open attitude' out in practice. In other words, *commitment to change* in Top Management Team talk required *changing* and *improving*, which was achieved by *carrying the thinking out*. Sentiments of control

were conveyed in the way in which Top Management Teams talked about *carrying the thinking out*.

Worker responses grouped under *commitment to change* pertained to actions that indicated *change to* or *improvement upon*, existing service delivery practices. In other words, responses conveyed sentiments on what it means to *change*. In contrast to the Top Management Team data, Worker responses did not convey a sense of how a *commitment to change* was achieved.

A relationship emerged between the Top Management Team property *carrying the thinking out* and the Worker property *they're not backing it up*. *They're not backing it up* was a property under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. While Top Management Teams talked of *carrying the thinking out*, Workers perceived Top Management Teams as *not backing the customer focus initiative up*. See discussion under *processes/systems/methods* under **our understanding of ourselves as providers** following.

Both the Top Management Team and Worker data conveyed a sense of **attitudes towards customers** as pertaining to *involvement*. Although *involvement* emerged across both data groups, a different sense was conveyed by responses grouped under the sub category. Top Management Teams and Workers talked about *involvement* in a positive sense. However, weakly emerging across the Worker data were responses conveying current *consultation* and *communication* processes in a negative sense. A negative sense to current *consultation* and *communication* processes did not emerge across the Top Management Team data.

Attitudes towards customers emerged as pertaining to types of *mindsets/attitudes* across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. *Mindsets/attitudes* emerged under different labels between the two data groups, however, responses were similar in the sense they pertained to either 'positive' or 'negative' forms. 'Negative' forms of *mindsets/attitudes* across the Top Management Team data were talked about as *the bureaucratic thing*, *the conservative element* and *the scientific attitude*. Across the Worker data, 'negative' forms of *mindsets/attitudes* were talked about as *bureaucratic/public service mentality*. 'Positive' forms of *mindsets/attitudes* talked about by Top Management Teams grouped under the property the *attitude thing*. Across the Worker data, 'positive' forms of *mindsets/attitudes* grouped under the label *attitudinal thing/believing in what you do*.

3. CUSTOMER UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES AS PROVIDERS

Customer awareness emerged as a well supported sub category under **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. *Customer awareness*, as in the sub category of the same name in **attitudes towards customers**, included responses pertaining to attitudes, knowledge, and understanding. It differed from the *customer awareness* sub category under **attitudes towards customers** in that responses pertained to customer attitudes, knowledge, and understanding. In other words, *customer awareness* as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** pertained to respondent perceptions of customer (as opposed to self) attitudes, knowledge, and understanding.

Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, responses grouped under *customer awareness* conveyed either 'positive' or 'negative' perceptions about customers. Positive perceptions were conveyed in the sense of customers *being aware of what we do* and *seeing things happen*. Negative perceptions of customers were conveyed in the sense of customers *seeing my job as unimportant*, *customers not interested in what we do* and *customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them*. 'Positive' perceptions about customers reflected an 'open attitude' in terms of *customer awareness*. 'Negative' perceptions about customers reflected a 'closed attitude' in terms of *customer awareness*. Across the Top Management Team data, *customer awareness* in a 'positive' sense was more strongly represented than in a 'negative' sense. Conversely, across the Worker data, *customer awareness* in a 'negative' sense was more strongly represented than in a 'positive' sense.

Involvement emerged as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across both data groups, *involvement* emerged as pertaining to consultation and communication with customers. However, a distinction emerged in the way in which *involvement* was construed. Top Management Team responses conveyed *involvement* in terms of 'positive' and 'negative' themes. Responses grouped under the 'positive' theme implied positive consequences from involving customers. In a like manner, responses grouped under the 'negative' theme implied negative consequences from not involving customers. Across the Worker data, *involvement* emerged in themes of 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. Responses grouped under the 'self interests'

theme implied a frame of reference primarily concerned with organisational interests. Responses grouped under the 'others' interests' theme implied a frame of reference primarily concerned with customer interests.

The difference in sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under the *involvement* sub category, suggested different frames of reference between Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about customer focus. For Top Management Teams, responses suggested a frame of reference concerned primarily with cause and effect. For Workers, responses suggested a frame of reference concerned with understanding the consequences of actions upon relationships. The notions of cause and effect, and understanding, are revealed more explicitly in comparing findings from the classifying phase - see following section.

Relationships emerged as a third sub category under **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across the Worker data, *relationships* was strongly associated with *communication* and hence the sub category title, *communication and relationships*. In both contexts, *relationships* was the least supported sub category under the **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

Across the Top Management Team data, properties of the *relationships* sub category conveyed a positive evaluation. In contrast, across the Worker data, responses emerged as conveying more negative evaluations. For example, the three Top Management Team properties under the *relationships* sub category, *general*, *word of mouth*, and *receiving bloody good complaints*, all implied positive evaluations from *relationships*. Across the Worker data, negative evaluations were associated with responses in the sense that they implied poor *communication and relationships* in practice. This sense was illustrated under the property *poor communication between us and the customer*. This emerged as the most important property across the Worker data.

4. OUR UNDERSTANDING OF OURSELVES AS PROVIDERS

The sub category *purpose and role* emerged as a strong element under **our understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. The sub category was strongly supported and represented across both data groups. Although properties and dimensions across both data groups

emerged in similar terms, a different sense to *purpose and role* was conveyed by the responses.

Across the Top Management Team data, *purpose and role* emerged as pertaining to three themes. These were termed 'general', 'old' and 'new'. Across the Worker data, four themes emerged, namely 'general', 'not shared', 'balancing' and 'talked about'. A similarity between the Top Management Team and Worker data was conveyed by responses grouped under the 'general' theme. Across both data groups, responses grouped under the 'general' theme pertained to what respondents perceived was the organisations' *purpose and role*. This was expressed as *knowing what to do, knowing our purpose and exist to do something core*.

A different sense of *purpose and role* between Top Management Teams and Workers emerged across the remaining themes. Top Management Team responses indicated two types of *purpose and role* grouped under the labels of 'old' and 'new'. Responses grouped under the 'old' theme conveyed a sense of how things used to be performed. Closely associated with an 'old' *purpose and role* were responses grouped under the 'old' theme of *mindsets/attitudes* under the **structure of customer focus** category. A similar argument emerged as plausible for the notions of 'new' *purpose and role* and 'new' *mindsets/attitudes*.

In contrast, Worker responses grouped under *purpose and role* pertained to themes labelled 'not shared', 'talked about' and 'balancing interests'. Responses grouped under the 'not shared' theme emerged as the most important. In other words, Workers talked about customer focus as a phenomenon that was 'talked about', but more importantly, was 'not shared'. Talk of 'balancing interests' indicated customer focus required 'balancing' service delivery between 'self' and 'others' interests. In other words, talk of 'balancing interests' closely aligned *purpose and role* with *servicing* as discussed under the **structure of customer focus** category.

The different sentiments conveyed by responses under the different themes across the two data groups indicated differences in the way Top Management Teams and Workers think about customer focus. Top Management Teams talked about *purpose and role* in a technical sense as an element which can be controlled and changed. *Purpose and role* was strongly related to *mindsets/attitudes*. In contrast, Workers talked about *purpose and role* in a social sense in terms of its meaning in practice. In other words, Workers talked about customer focus from a point of view concerned with understanding. The notion of understanding is developed further in the

processes/systems/methods sub category - see following. Words used by Workers in talking about *purpose and role* strongly indicated that customer focus was something that was 'talked about' and 'not shared'. In other words, Workers talk suggested a lack of shared understanding towards customer focus in practice.

The sub category *processes/systems/methods* emerged as a strong element to **our understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. The sub category was strongly supported and represented across both data groups. Properties and dimensions of the sub category emerged in similar terms across the two data groups. However, as with the *purpose and role* sub category, a different sense of *processes/systems/methods* was conveyed by responses.

Across the Top Management Team data, *processes/systems/methods* emerged as pertaining to five themes. These were termed 'general', 'new', 'barriers', 'opportunities' and 'threats'. Across the Worker data, six themes emerged, namely 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'barriers/problems', 'threats', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships'.

All five themes of the Top Management Team data conveyed *processes/systems/methods* in a technical sense. That is, responses concerning *processes/systems/methods* pertained mainly to technical elements of organisational functioning. These technical elements were conveyed in the sense of being either:

- 'general' - general perceptions of *processes/systems/methods*;
- 'new' - elements which are performed as a consequence of being customer focused;
- 'barriers' - elements which are recognised as inhibiting customer focus efforts;
- 'opportunities' - elements which assist organisations to be customer focused;
- and
- 'threats' - recognition of the ability of customers to procure services from alternate service providers.

Top Management Team talk of *processes/systems/methods* in a technical senses conveyed a control frame of reference in the performance of customer focus. The 'new' theme under *processes/systems/methods* emerged as a contradiction in context with the notion of 'new' ways of thinking and acting under *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role*. 'New' under *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* implied thinking and acting in social ways, while responses grouped under the label of 'new'

under *processes/systems/methods* emerged as pertaining to thinking and acting in technical ways. In other words, while Top Management Team talked of 'new' *processes/systems/methods*, the meaning of this talk was in *servicing* 'self interests' by way of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

Two of the six Worker themes emerged as pertaining to technical aspects of organisational functioning. These were the 'barriers/problems' and 'threats' themes. The remaining four themes, 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships', emerged in contrast to the other two themes in the sense that they pertained to more social aspects of organisational life. Of the six themes, 'non commitment' and 'poor relationships' emerged as the most important. This finding conveyed a sense of equivocality amongst Workers towards customer focus. In other words, while customer focus emerged as pertaining to 'positive' social ways of thinking and acting, responses concerning *processes/systems/methods* conveyed a sense of 'poor relationships' and 'non commitment' in practice. 'Poor relationships' and 'non commitment' in the talk of Workers was conveyed by the properties *not backing it up, no encouragement to provide customer focus, there isn't the two way communication between the Workers and the managers, and managers don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey*. The sense of equivocality suggested a lack of shared understanding towards customer focus between Top Management Teams and Workers. This notion of a lack of shared understanding supported Worker talk about *purpose and role* under the themes of 'talked about' and 'not shared'.

Change emerged as a third sub category under **our understanding of ourselves as providers** across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. The sub category was strongly related to the *commitment to change* sub category under **attitudes towards customers**. It differed from the *commitment to change* sub category in that *change* was expressed in terms of respondents' perceptions of how they had *changed* in relation to their **understanding of themselves as providers**, as opposed to perceptions of a *commitment to change* in relation to **attitudes towards customers**.

Properties and dimensions under the sub category emerged as pertaining to similar themes across the two data groups. That is, *change* emerged as pertaining to 'process' and 'mindsets/attitudes'. A third theme emerged from the Top Management Team data locating *change* in context with customers. This was represented by responses grouped under the property *changing customer perceptions*.

Across both data groups, *change* was more strongly associated with 'process'. *Change* in terms of 'process' across the Top Management Team data was represented by responses grouped under the property *starting to turn the ship/the big turn around*. Responses pertaining to 'process' across the Worker data were grouped under the properties *gearing towards customer focus/changing ways of doing things* and *changing our work practices to give management what they want*. The data was associated with 'process' in the sense that *change* was with the things that individuals did. In this sense, *change* was also associated with 'self interests' to the extent that action was concerned with **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. This sense was strongly conveyed by Worker responses grouped under the property *changing our work practices to give management what they want*.

Across both data groups, *change* was associated with the more social aspects of organisational functioning in terms of *mindsets/attitudes*. Properties pertaining to 'mindsets/attitudes' across the Top Management Team data were *changing the culture/mindsets* and *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst*. Properties pertaining to 'mindsets/attitudes' across the Worker data were *changing the attitude/getting away form the old style mentality of look there's the rules and the cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second*. The data was associated with the more social elements of organisational functioning in the sense that *change* was concerned with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. In this sense, *change* related to *servicing 'others' interests'* to the extent that action was concerned with social aspects of organising.

While Top Management Teams talked about *change* as pertaining to doing things differently, the Worker data conveyed a different sentiment. This difference in sentiment was conveyed by responses grouped under the property *the cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second*. This property was more strongly supported than the property *changing the attitude/getting away form the old style mentality of look there's the rules*. Worker talk indicated 'mindsets/attitudes' had not *changed*. In other words, Workers attributed 'mindsets/attitudes' as a reason for things not *changing*.

5. PERCEPTIONS OF CUSTOMER FOCUS

Both the Top Management Team and Worker data contained responses pertaining to **perceptions of customer focus**. Across both data groups, responses were specific to

the *governments customer focus program*. Properties and dimensions across the two data groups were numerous and wide-ranging. This reflected a diversity of perspectives held on the *governments customer focus program*. Although numerous and wide-ranging across both data groups, responses emerged as pertaining to two themes termed 'positive' and 'negative'. A third theme emerged across the Top Management Team data, termed 'general'. The 'general' theme was comprised of properties labelled *strategy/philosophy/ideology, consulting/ decision making/ focused, external focus, and improvement*. This theme emerged as strongly related with the *purpose and role* sub category under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. This relationship was drawn in the sense that properties and dimensions to the 'general' theme of *the government's customer focus program* were similar to properties and dimensions grouped under the *purpose and role* sub category under **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Grouped under the 'positive' theme were responses conveying positive evaluations towards the *government's customer focus program*. Across the Top Management Team data, dimensions of the 'positive' theme included *staff getting some benefits and the program was presented quite well*. Across the Worker data, dimensions of the 'positive' theme included *potential for something good to come from it, we had to have customer focus and reminding us who are customers are*.

Grouped under the 'negative' theme were responses conveying negative evaluations towards the *government's customer focus program*. Across the Top Management Team data, dimensions of the 'negative' theme included *it's absolutely horse shit, a fad and not well thought through*. Across the Worker data, dimensions of the 'negative' theme included *its flavour of the month stuff, haven't paid much attention to it and it could be over applied and time consuming*.

Across both data groups, the *government's customer focus program* sub category was only moderately supported. Notwithstanding, across the Top Management Team data, 'negative' views were more strongly represented than 'positive' ones, while across the Worker data the situation was reverse. In other words, across the Worker data, 'positive' views were more strongly represented than 'negative' ones.

Two additional sub categories emerged under the **perceptions of customer focus** category across the Top Management Team data, labelled *PSMO/government/Minister* and *other agencies*. In contrast, only one additional category emerged across the Worker data, labelled *Top Management Team*.

Although responses grouped under the sub categories labelled *PSMO/government/Minister* and *Top Management Team* pertained to two different groups of individuals, in the context of the data groups, the two were viewed as related. This relationship was formed on the basis that the responses pertained to **perceptions of customer focus** exhibited by individuals to whom respondents had a reporting responsibility and accountability. For example, in the Worker context, individuals to whom respondents had a reporting responsibility and accountability were *Top Management Team*. In the Top Management Team context, individuals to whom respondents had a reporting responsibility and accountability were *PSMO/government/ Minister*. Accordingly, data grouped under the label of *Top Management Team* across the Worker data and *PSMO/government/Minister* across the Top Management Team data were related in the sense that responses pertained to perceptions of individuals to whom respondents had a reporting responsibility and accountability.

Properties and dimensions of perceptions of individuals to whom respondents had a reporting responsibility and accountability across both the Top Management Team and Worker data emerged as pertaining to two themes, termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Across the Top Management Team data, 'negative' responses were more strongly represented than 'positive' ones. In other words, respondents perceived *PSMO/government/Minister* in a 'negative' light in terms of the customer focus exhibited by them. In contrast, across the Worker data, 'positive' responses were more strongly represented than 'negative' ones. In other words, respondents perceived *Top Management Teams* in a 'positive' light in terms of the customer focus exhibited by them.

The third sub category under the **perceptions of customer focus** category across the Top Management Team data grouped responses pertaining to **perceptions of customer focus** exhibited by other agencies. No responses emerged for this context across the Worker data. All responses were grouped under a single theme termed 'negative'. In other words, respondents perceived *other agencies* in a 'negative' light in terms of the customer focus exhibited by them.

6. CUSTOMER FACTORS IMPACTING ON CUSTOMER FOCUS

Both the Top Management Team and Worker data included responses pertaining to **customer factors impacting on customer focus**. Six sub categories emerged across the Top Management Team data. Three sub categories emerged across the Worker

data. The three Worker sub categories were represented across the Top Management Team data. In other words, *customer types*, *perceived customer status* and *customer behaviours and abilities* emerged as important **customer factors impacting on customer focus** for both Top Management Teams and Workers. The three additional sub categories that emerged as important **customer factors impacting on customer focus** for Top Management Teams were *service context/location*, *government factors* and *servicing relationship*. The category was minimally supported across both data groups.

Across both data groups, *customer types* emerged as a strong element of **customer factors impacting on customer focus**. Properties and dimensions across the two data groups were numerous and wide-ranging. This reflected a diversity of perspectives held on who the customers were. No clear picture emerged as to what was a *customer*. Rather, *customer types* were various depending upon the context in which they were referred to. In some instances, *customers* were referred to as individuals *external* to the organisation. In other contexts, *customers* included *fellow Workers* (the internals) and *stakeholders*. Further still, *customer types* included *all peoples of the state of Western Australia*, regardless of whether or not they were in need of a service.

Perceived customer status emerged as a sub category across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across both data groups properties and dimensions under the sub category conveyed similar meanings. Top Management Teams and Workers talked about certain customers as being more important than others. For example, requests for services from customers such as Ministers or Top Management Teams *get absolutely top service* or *top priority*. In addition, the data indicated certain customers as exerting a controlling influence over service providers. For example, responses including *bodies able to change things*, *capacity to promote us*, and *thrusting upon us pressure on us to change* provided evidence of how certain customers are perceived as exerting an influence over service providers.

Perceived customer status across the Top Management Team data emerged as the most supported sub category for the **customer factors impacting on customer focus** category. The sub category was moderately supported, represented across all data groups. Across the Worker data, *perceived customer status* was weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets. The finding suggested *perceived customer status* was more of an important factor for Top Management Teams than Workers.

The sub category *customer behaviours and abilities* emerged across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. The sub category grouped responses pertaining to various perceived *behaviours and abilities* that influenced service delivery. The sub category emerged as more important for Workers than for Top Management Teams. Across both data groups, responses grouped under *customer behaviours and abilities* emerged as pertaining to two themes, labelled 'various' and 'negative'. The 'various' theme indicated that there was a wide range of *customer behaviours and abilities* that influenced service delivery. The 'negative' theme also indicated a wide range of *customer behaviours and abilities* that influenced service delivery, except in these instances a negative evaluation was associated with the particular attribute. Across both data groups, *customer behaviours and abilities* conveying negative evaluations were more strongly represented.

7. FINDING OUT ABOUT CUSTOMERS

Finding out about customers was moderately supported across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Three properties emerged for the sub category across the Top Management Team data, while two emerged across the Worker data. The two sub categories grouped under the Worker data were also represented in the Top Management Team data. In other words, *communication and building relationships*, and *processes/systems/methods* emerged as important elements in **finding out about customers** for both Top Management Teams and Workers.

Properties and dimensions for the *communication and building relationships* sub category across the two data groups emerged as being similar. Across the Top Management Team data, the property *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you* built a link between the categories **attitudes towards customers** and **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The category **attitudes towards customers** grouped responses pertaining to *understanding the customer*. The category **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** grouped responses pertaining to *customer understanding of service providers*. In other words, the sub category *communication and building relationships* associated **attitudes towards customers** with **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. This association suggested the two categories were essentially elements pertaining to the broader phenomenon of communication. The association between the two categories did not emerge as explicitly across the Worker data, however a similar intent was implied by the property *the communication thing/the two way thing*. *The two way*

thing was comprised of the elements **attitudes towards customers** and **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Processes/systems/methods across both data groups included responses pertaining to actions that lead to *finding things out about customers*. Across the Worker data, responses emerged as pertaining to two themes, 'pro-active' and 'reactive'. Responses grouped under the 'pro-active' theme pertained to actions that respondents actively undertook by themselves in *finding things out about customers*. Responses grouped under the 'reactive' theme pertained to actions initiated by customers that lead to organisations *finding things out about customers*. Across the Worker data, 'pro-active' responses emerged as more important than responses grouped under the theme 'reactive'.

Across the Top Management Team data, responses emerged as pertaining to actions that respondents actively undertook by themselves in *finding things out about customers*. As such, talk by Top Management Teams about *finding things out about customers* was classified as pertaining to 'pro-active' actions.

A third sub category emerged across the Top Management Team data, labelled *mindsets/attitudes*. This sub category suggested *processes/systems/methods* were associated with a particular type of *mindset/attitude*. In the words of Top Management Teams, the type of *mindset/attitude* was a *culture of measuring*. This type of *mindset/attitude* strongly related to the 'open attitude' theme of customer awareness under the **attitudes towards customers** category. In other words, a *culture of measuring* was strongly related with the notions of *thinking from the customer perspective, focusing on/ understanding your customers, and knowing who and what the customers are and what their needs are*. A *culture of measuring* in terms of an 'open attitude' was supported by Top Management Team talk on *processes/systems/methods* in the sense that the responses conveyed a sentiment of 'pro-active' action.

8. ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS IMPACTING ON CUSTOMER FOCUS

Organisational factors impacting on customer focus emerged across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across both data groups, seven sub categories emerged for the category. Six of the sub categories were common between the two, namely *resources and capacity, relationships, staff/comportment of our people, involvement and commitment, management culture and role and structure*. Although

dimensions to the six sub categories were similar across the two data groups, different meanings were conveyed by the responses.

Resources and capacity grouped responses indicating human and physical resources to be an important **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**. The sub category was strongly related to properties pertaining to *resources and capacity* grouped under the 'barriers' theme for Top Management Teams, and the 'barriers/problems' theme for Workers, under *processes/systems/methods* under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Responses were grouped under different categories depending upon the way in which *resources and capacity* were talked about. Responses conveying *resources and capacity* in a *processes/systems/methods* sense were grouped under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In contrast, responses conveying *resources and capacity* in an ill-defined sense were grouped under the category **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The importance of the sub category was the link it established between *resources and capacity* in general terms as an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** and more specifically, as an element of *processes/systems/methods* which was viewed as a 'barrier/problem' to customer focus.

Two properties emerged for the sub category across the Top Management Team data. The properties grouped responses conveying either 'non evaluative' or 'negative' views about organisations' capacity to deliver services demanded by customers. Three properties emerged for the sub category across the Worker data. The properties grouped responses conveying 'non evaluative', 'negative' and 'positive' views concerning organisations' capacity to deliver services demanded by customers. Across both data groups, responses conveying 'negative' evaluations were more strongly represented than responses conveying either 'non evaluative' or 'positive' evaluations.

Although similarities emerged in terms of the words spoken by Top Management Teams and Workers about *resources and capacity*, different sentiments were conveyed by the data across the two data groups. Top Management Team talk about limited *resources and capacity* associated an inability to do the things required to be undertaken with the notion of control. In other words, the negative talk about *resources and capacity* was conveyed as being an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** which was out of Top Management Team control. In contrast, Worker talk on limited *resources and capacity* associated an inability to do the things

required to be undertaken with the notion of understanding. In other words, the negative talk about *resources and capacity* was conveyed as being an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** because of a perceived lack of understanding by Top Management Teams of the things Workers were required to perform.

Relationships was concerned with responses pertaining to internal relationships between Top Management Teams and Workers. Across both data groups, the sub category was strongly related to the property of the same name under the category **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. Responses under both sub categories indicated customer focus was strongly related to the notion of *relationships*. The sub categories were located under different categories as *relationships* were associated either with customers in terms of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, or amongst staff in terms of an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**.

Across the Top Management Team data, responses were classified as principally conveying a 'non evaluative' sentiment. In other words, the data indicated *relationships* to be an important **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**, however, no evaluation was made as to how existing *relationships* were perceived. Across the Worker data, responses were classified according to three themes, 'non evaluative', 'positive' and 'negative'. Although the properties were weakly supported across the Worker data, responses conveying a 'negative' evaluation were more strongly represented than those conveying either a 'positive' or 'non evaluative' evaluation. In other words, Workers were saying relationships amongst staff were more 'negative' than 'positive'. This supported Worker talk of 'poor relationships' under *processes/systems/methods* under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Staff/comportment of our people was concerned with responses pertaining to perceived attributes of staff that influenced customer focus. Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data a plethora of attributes emerged. The data suggested *staff/comportment of our people* was an important **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**.

Involvement and commitment was concerned with responses pertaining to notions of consultation, involvement, and communication. Across both data groups, the sub category was strongly related to sub categories of the same name under the categories **attitudes towards customers** and **customer understanding of ourselves**

as providers. The sub categories were located under different categories as the *involvement and commitment* was associated with either:

- customers in terms of **attitudes towards customers**;
- systems, and methods of consultation and communication, in terms of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**, or
- staff in terms of an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**.

Top Management Team responses grouped under the *involvement and commitment* sub category conveyed two types of sentiments, termed 'involving' and 'excluding'. 'Involving' sentiments were conveyed by responses that indicated customer focus required the *involvement and commitment* of staff. 'Excluding' sentiments were conveyed by responses that indicated customer focus as not requiring the *involvement and commitment* of staff. Top Management Team responses conveying an 'involving' sense were more strongly represented than those conveying an 'excluding' sense. The sub category was only weakly supported across the Worker data. The Worker data merely supported the notion of *involvement and commitment* as one further **organisational factor impacting on customer focus**.

Management culture and role was concerned with responses pertaining to perceptions of the *culture and role of management*. Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, a variety of dimensions emerged that reflected a diversity in meaning of *management culture and role* amongst respondents. The sub category was important to the extent that it suggested *management culture and role* was distinct from the *culture and role* of other organisational members.

Structure was concerned with responses pertaining to the formal organisational structure. It was the least supported sub category across both data groups. The sub category was important to the extent that organisation structure was perceived as one further **factor impacting on customer focus**.

An additional sub category emerged across the Top Management Team data labelled *volunteers and guides*. The sub category was supported across only two of the six Top Management Team data sets. Responses grouped under the sub category indicated that *volunteers and guides* were an important **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** for two organisations. Top Management Team talk about *volunteers and guides* conveyed both positive and negative sentiments.

An additional sub category emerged across the Worker data labelled *perceived purpose and role of government agencies*. Responses grouped under the sub category indicated that government organisations were perceived by Workers as having different responsibilities and obligations from other types of organisations. The sub category was weakly supported, represented across two of the six Worker data sets.

9. ELEMENTS WHICH NEED TO BE BALANCED

Elements which need to be balanced was a category emerging from the Top Management Team data only. The category was minimally represented across the Top Management Team data. The category was comprised of two sub categories labelled *resources and role* and *words and actions*.

Resources and role was generated from responses that suggested customer focus required balancing what is required by customers against organisations' *resources and capacity* to deliver. *Words and actions* was generated from responses that suggested customer focus required the balancing of what is said will be delivered against what is actually delivered. Responses grouped under the *words and actions* sub category indicated Top Management Teams perceive an inconsistency between what organisations say they do with what they are perceived to do.

Although the category was not represented across the Worker data, the sentiments conveyed by responses were. The notion of 'balancing' emerged as a theme across the Worker data under *purpose and role* under **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Balancing, in this context, emerged as pertaining to *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. Top Management Team talk of balancing in terms of both *resources and role* and *words and actions* conveyed a sense of 'self interests' to the extent that they conveyed sentiments of control. The sub categories conveyed sentiments of control in the sense that balancing was a technical action that could be manipulated and changed.

SUMMARY FOR COMPARISON OF DATA GENERATED AT THE CATEGORISATION PHASE

Customer focus in the talk of both Top Management Teams and Workers was conveyed by similar words. Top Management Team talk was categorised under nine categories. Worker talk was categorised under eight categories. The eight Worker categories were replicas of the Top Management Team data. Although Top

Management Teams and Workers talked about customer focus using similar words, different sentiments were conveyed by these words. In other words, while the language in-use of Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about customer focus was similar, categorisation of the words emerged different sentiments. The differences in sentiments were surfaced more descriptively through comparison of the classified data. This comparison is presented in the following section - comparison of data generated at the categorisation phase.

Discussion of findings from analysis of the Top Management Team and Worker data at the 'classification' phase

This Chapter section constructs interpretations for important phenomena and dominant themes emerging across the two data groups. Comparisons of findings at the classifying phase details the central arguments pertaining to the way Top Management Teams and Workers operationalise what they think about customer focus.

OVERVIEW OF COMPARISON OF DATA GENERATED AT THE CLASSIFICATION PHASE

Classifying the Top Management Team and Worker data on the basis of themes identified throughout the analysis at the categorisation phases, grounded the meanings held by respondents towards customer focus. Comparison of the categorised data across both data groups demonstrably supported the notion of customer focus as pertaining to two dominant phenomena. These were:

- *mindsets/attitudes*; and
- *servicing*.

The *mindset/attitude* phenomenon related to structural aspects of customer focus. Structure of customer focus was associated with responses that pertained to 'what we do'. The *servicing* phenomenon related to processual aspects of customer focus. Process of customer focus was associated with responses that pertained to 'how we do it'.

Top Management Team and Worker perceptions on structure and process conveyed a sense of what respondents say they think - the enacted premise and meanings taken contexts respectively. Across both data groups, the structural and processual aspects

of customer focus emerged as strongly relational. In other words, the structure and process themes emerged from Top Management Team and Worker responses on customer focus existed in a strong relationship. The merging of structure process enabled analysis of the way respondents operationalise what they think. In the Top Management Team context, the merging of structure and process surfaced respondents' practice. In the Worker context, the merging of structure and process surfaced meanings received in practice. In other words, the interaction of structure and process *is* organising in practice from Top Management Teams' and Workers' points of view.

Comparisons of findings at the classifying phases are presented in three parts. First, a comparison of the structure themes between both data groups is discussed. Second, a comparison of the process themes between both data groups is discussed. The classified data as themes represents Top Management Team enacted premise and Worker meanings taken for customer focus. Third, a discussion on the interaction of the two themes as supported by the data is presented. The interaction of the classified data in context of Top Management Teams was customer focus in practice. In context of Workers, the interaction of the structure and process themes was customer focus received in practice.

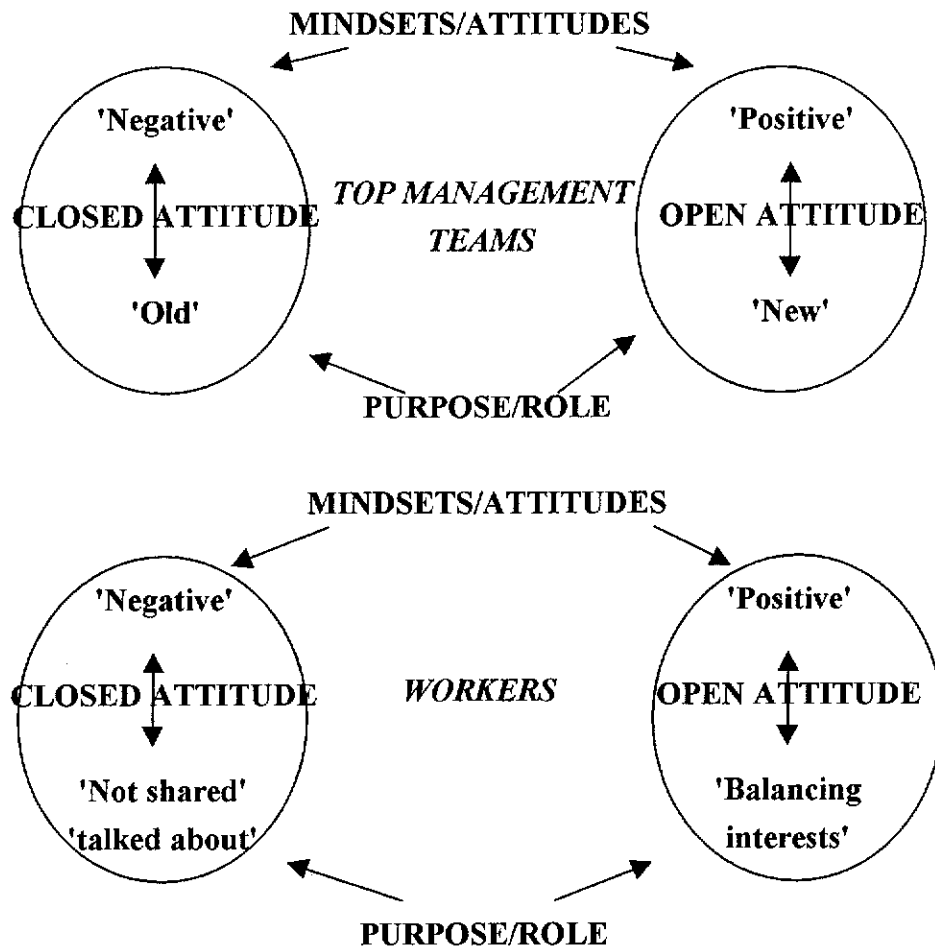
The study's interest is in investigating the alignment in meanings individuals attribute to customer focus from two organisational contexts; the enacted premise and the received practice. The findings derived from the Top Management Team premise context and the Worker received practice context grounds the study's conclusions presented in Chapter seven.

COMPARISON OF THE STRUCTURE THEMES

Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, customer focus emerged in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role*. Across both data groups, *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* were talked about in two forms. *Mindsets/attitudes* were talked about as being either 'negative' or 'positive'. In contrast, *purpose and role* across the two data groups was talked about in different ways. In the Top Management Team context, *purpose and role* was talked about as being either 'old' or 'new'. In the Worker context, *purpose and role* emerged as pertaining to either 'not shared' and 'talked about', or 'balancing interests'.

Across both data groups, *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* emerged as being strongly related. This relationship was drawn principally on the themes emerging from Top Management Team and Worker responses categorised under the label of *customer awareness*. Across both data groups, *customer awareness* emerged as conveying sentiments labelled 'open attitudes' and 'closed attitudes'. Across the Top Management Team data, 'open attitudes' were associated with 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'new' *purpose and role*. Similarly, a strong association emerged with 'closed attitudes', 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'old' *purpose and role*. Across the Worker data, 'open attitudes' were associated with 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* in terms of 'balancing interests'. Similarly, a strong association emerged with 'closed attitudes', 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* and the 'not shared', 'talked about' *purpose and role*. The relationships between *customer awareness*, *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* for the two data groups were detailed in Figures 5.1 and 5.9 in Chapter five. For reader ease, the two figures are placed together in Figure 6.1.

FIGURE 6.1: Comparison of The Meanings of Customer Focus in a Structural Sense as Talked About by Top Management Teams and Workers



Similarities and differences between the Top Management Team and Worker talk on structural aspects to customer focus are summarised by comparing themes emerging from the classified data on three levels:

- words spoken (language in-use);
- evaluations conveyed by the words;
- and
- meanings attributed to the words spoken and evaluations conveyed by these words.

Similarities in the talk of customer focus in a structural sense between Top Management Teams and Workers are summarised as follows.

- Customer focus in a structural sense grouped responses on attitudes held by individuals.

- Structural elements to customer focus were associated principally with phenomena grouped under the labels of *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role*.
- *Mindsets/attitudes* were talked about as being one of two types.
- Evaluations conveyed by words used in talking about *mindsets/attitudes* were either 'positive' or 'negative'.
- Meanings for the words and evaluations conveyed by these words on the two types of *mindsets/attitudes* were shared.
- *Purpose and role* was talked about as being one of two types.
- Evaluations conveyed by words used in talking about *purpose and role* were either 'positive' or 'negative'.
- *Mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* emerged as being strongly related.
- The relationships formed between *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* pertained to a broader classification of attitudes conveying an 'open' or 'closed' sentiment.
- Customer focus in a structural sense of *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role* was strongly associated with *change*.

Differences in the talk on customer focus in a structural sense between Top Management Teams and Workers emerged in one aspect.

- Meanings for the words and evaluations conveyed by these words on the two types of *purpose and role*.

The difference in talk on customer focus in a structural sense between Top Management Teams and Workers was as follows.

Top Management Team talked about *purpose and role* in much the same way as they talked about *mindsets/attitudes*. That is, *purpose and role* was talked about in terms of either the 'old' or the 'new'. The 'old' was associated with negative evaluations while the 'new' was associated with positive evaluations. In contrast, Workers talked about *purpose and role* in terms of either 'not shared' and 'talked about' or 'balancing interests'. 'Not shared' and 'talked about' were associated with negative evaluations while 'balancing interests' was associated with positive evaluations. Comparing the words and evaluations conveyed by these words on the two types of *purpose and role* indicated that different meanings were held by Top Management Teams and Workers on organisations' *purpose and role*.

The differences in meanings held on the 'positive' and 'negative' views on organisations' *purpose and role* between Top Management Teams and Workers emerged as a core phenomenon. Top Management Team talk on *purpose and role* aligned with functionalist thinking to the extent that social 'reality' was implied to exist as a hard, tangible fact, external to individuals. In other words, talk on the 'old' and the 'new' conveyed a sense of *purpose and role* as existing out there, independently of individuals' awareness of it. The role of Top Management Teams was conveyed as to *change* the way Workers think about the things they do. (The notion of *change* also conveyed sentiments of control which is discussed below). In contrast, Worker talk on *purpose and role* aligned with interpretivist thinking to the extent that what is 'real' was defined by the meanings that individuals hold towards things. In other words, 'reality' was socially constructed through the words, symbols and behaviours of organisational members. The strong representation and support for the 'not shared' and 'talked about' themes strongly conveyed a lack of shared understanding of organisations' *purpose and role* between Top Management Teams and Workers.

Supporting the argument of Worker talk to align with interpretivist thinking on 'reality' were responses grouped under the label of 'balancing interests'. 'Balancing interests', in a structural sense, meant 'balancing' *servicing* delivery between 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. *Servicing* was associated with customer focus in a process sense. The Worker data indicated that the structural elements of customer focus were inter-woven with processual elements. In other words, Worker talk on structure merged with Worker talk on process. The merger of structure and process, and the nature of the language in-use, indicated that customer focus from Workers' points of view was concerned with the core phenomenon of understanding.

Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a structural sense as pertaining to *mindsets/attitudes* were responses grouped under the label of *change*. *Change* was strongly represented and supported across the Top Management Team and Worker data in both a structure and process sense. It is the former context that is of interest to the current discussion.

Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, *change* emerged as a sub category labelled *commitment to change* under the category **attitudes towards customers**, and as a sub category labelled *change* under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Under both categories, *change* was associated with both *mindsets/attitudes* and *purpose and role*. In other words,

change meant aligning individuals' thinking towards the 'open attitude'. This was explicitly illustrated across the Top Management Team data by responses grouped under the property *carrying the thinking out*. Thinking in this context referred to the 'open attitude'.

Although the words used by Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about *change* were similar, sentiments conveyed by the language in-use revealed different meanings. For Top Management Teams, *change* meant stopping one set of behaviours while adopting another. *Purpose and role*, as a manifestation of structure, was conveyed as a social fact that shapes the actions of organisational members. Sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under *change* provided support for the idea that Top Management Team talk was aligned with functionalist thinking.

For Workers, *change* emerged as a more complex phenomenon. Worker talk on *change* conveyed a sense of action that required more than merely stopping some behaviours while encouraging others. *Change* was conveyed as a sense making process in that it had to do with things being 'not shared' and 'talked about'. In other words, *change* was associated with processes of understanding in bringing about desired behaviours. Sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under *change* supported the idea that Worker talk was aligned with interpretivist thinking.

COMPARISON OF THE PROCESS THEMES

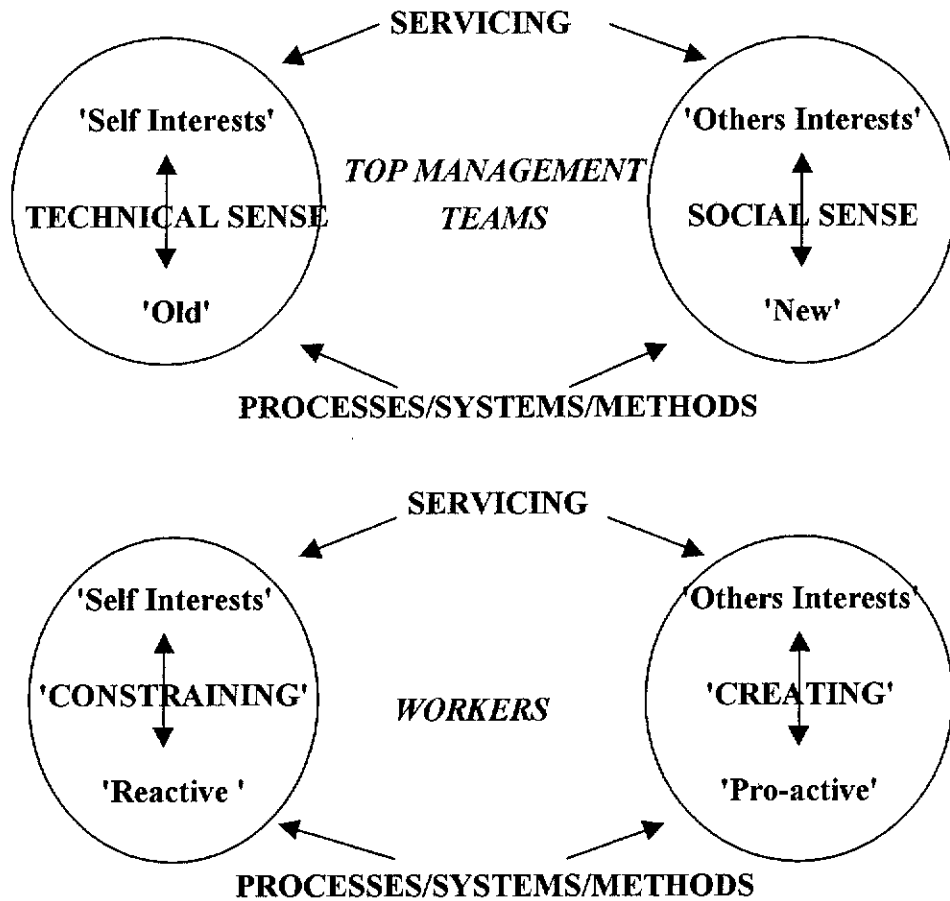
Across both the Top Management Team and Worker data, customer focus emerged in a process sense as pertaining to *servicing* and *processes/systems/methods*. Although *processes/systems/methods* was a sub category label in its own right, both data groups included various other sub categories pertaining to action. These various other sub categories pertaining to action included *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication*. As argued in the analysis of the classified data for both the Top Management Teams and Workers, the various other sub categories were all elements of *processes/systems/methods* associated with the phenomenon of *servicing*.

Across both data groups *servicing*, *processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action, were talked about in two forms. *Servicing* was talked about as pertaining to action that serviced either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'. In contrast, *processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub

categories pertaining to action across the two data groups were talked about in different ways. In the Top Management Team context, *processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action were talked about as being either 'old' or 'new'. In the Worker context, *processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action emerged as being either 'reactive' or 'pro-active'.

Across both data groups *servicing, processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action, emerged as being strongly related. The relationship formed conveyed different sentiments across the two data groups. Across the Top Management Team data, the relationship between the two forms of *servicing, processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action, conveyed sentiments of process as being either 'technical' or 'social'. Across the Worker data, the relationship emerged as being to two different forms of 'social' process, termed 'constraining' and 'creating'. The relationships, for the two data groups, between *servicing, processes/systems/methods* and the various other sub categories pertaining to action, were detailed in Figures 5.3 and 5.10 in Chapter five. For reader ease, the two figures are placed together in Figure 6.2.

FIGURE 6.2: Comparison of Meanings of Customer Focus in a Process Sense as Talked About by Top Management Teams and Workers



As with structural aspects, similarities and differences between the Top Management Team and Worker talk on processual aspects to customer focus are summarised by comparing themes emerging from the classified data on three levels:

- words spoken (language in-use);
- evaluations conveyed by the words;
and
- meanings attributed to the words spoken and evaluations conveyed by these words.

Similarities in the talk of customer focus in a process sense between Top Management Teams and Workers are summarised as follows.

- Customer focus in a process sense grouped responses concerned with action.

- Process elements to customer focus were associated principally with phenomena grouped under the labels of *servicing* and *processes/systems/methods*.
- *Processes/systems/methods* were associated with various other sub categories pertaining to action, including *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication*.
- *Servicing* was talked about as being one of two types.
- Sentiments conveyed by words used in talking about *servicing* pertained to either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'.
- Meanings of the words and sentiments conveyed by words on the two types of *servicing* were shared.
- *Processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action were talked about as being one of two types.
- *Servicing*, *processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action emerged as being strongly related.
- Customer focus in a process sense of *servicing*, *processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action were strongly associated with *change*.

Differences in the talk of customer focus in a process sense between Top Management Teams and Workers are summarised as follows.

- Evaluations conveyed by words used in talking about the two types of *processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action.
- Meanings of the words and evaluations conveyed by words on the two types of *processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action.
- The relationships formed between *servicing*, and *processes/systems/methods* and associated sub categories pertaining to action.

Differences in talk on customer focus in a structural sense between Top Management Teams and Workers emerged in a number of aspects. These differences were as follows.

While across both data groups there were two differing forms of *processes/systems/methods*, evaluations conveyed by this talk between the data groups were also different. The differing types of *processes/systems/methods* across both groups pertained to actions that *serviced* either 'self interests' or 'others' interests'. Evaluations of actions *servicing* 'self interests' and 'others' interests' between the data

groups were different. In the Top Management Team context, evaluations of *processes/systems/methods* were conveyed as being 'old' and 'new'. 'Old' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. 'New' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'. In the Worker context, evaluations of *processes/systems/methods* were conveyed as being 'reactive' and 'pro-active'. 'Reactive' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. 'Pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'.

Strengthening the difference in evaluations conveyed by Top Management Team and Worker talk on *processes/systems/methods* were meanings attributed to this talk.

Across the Top Management Team data, 'old' *processes/systems/methods* pertained to actions concerned with techniques of process. Techniques of process were concerned with 'technical' elements to organisational functioning. This sentiment emerged strongly from responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. The label of 'technical' was applied as responses pertained to techniques of process, as opposed to the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. The nature of the 'technical' aspects to organising were associated with *servicing* 'self interests' in the sense responses pertained to **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In other words, actions that *service* 'self interests' were associated with 'old' *processes/systems/methods* that pertained to 'technical' elements of organisational functioning.

The meaning of *processes/systems/methods* in the 'new' sense across the Top Management Team data emerged from the associated sub categories pertaining to action. As stated previously, these associated sub categories pertaining to action included responses grouped under the labels *involvement, commitment, relationships* and *communication*. *Involvement, commitment, relationships* and *communication* were classified as pertaining to 'social' aspects of organising in that they were concerned with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. In other words, actions which *service* 'others' interests' were associated with 'new' *processes/systems/methods* that pertained to 'social' elements of organisational functioning.

One point of interest were Top Management Team responses grouped under the theme labelled 'new' under *processes/systems/methods* under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Responses grouped under the category conveyed *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests' in that the talk of process pertained to techniques of process. 'Technical' actions that *service* 'self interests' were argued as pertaining to the broader theme of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*. The emergence of a 'new' theme of *processes/systems/methods* under **our understanding of ourselves as providers** contradicted the themes grouped under the broader label of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*. The finding suggested Top Management Team applied 'old' ways of thinking and acting under talk of the 'new'. In other words, Top Management Team customer focus practice was constructed as being the 'old' under talk of the 'new'.

Across the Worker data, both the 'reactive' and 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* pertained to actions concerned with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. Psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work, were the 'social' elements to organisational functioning. The notions of 'reactive' and 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* emerged from responses grouped under the labels of *processes/systems/methods*, and associated sub categories pertaining to action. As with the Top Management Team data, the associated sub categories pertaining to action included responses grouped under the labels *involvement, commitment, relationships and communication*. There was no substantial evidence for *processes/systems/methods* in a 'technical' sense emerging from the Worker data.

The relationship between *servicing* and *processes/systems/methods* across the Worker data was grounded through sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. The four most important themes emerging under the sub category were labelled 'commitment', 'non commitment', 'relationships' and 'poor relationships'. All four pertained to 'social' elements of organising. The four themes were clustered into two groups on the basis that they pertained to different types of 'social' action. 'Commitment' and 'relationships' were related in the sense they helped 'create' 'social' relationships. 'Non commitment' and 'poor relationships' were related in the sense they were 'constraints' to 'social' relationships. 'Constraining' relationships were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'self interests'. 'Creating' relationships were associated with *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests'.

The picture of customer focus in a process sense emerged as meaning different things for Top Management Teams and Workers. Top Management Teams talked about customer focus in a process sense as 'old' and 'new' forms. The 'old' form pertained to actions concerned with techniques of process (the 'technical') while the 'new' forms pertained to the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work (the 'social'). Workers talked about customer focus in a process sense as 'reactive' and 'pro-active' actions. Both actions were concerned with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work.

The differences in the talk on customer focus in a process sense between Top Management Teams and Workers reinforced the core notion that Top Management Teams and Workers fundamentally viewed the processes of customer focus through different lenses. As with *purpose and role*, Top Management Team talk on *processes/systems/ methods* aligned with functionalist thinking to the extent that social 'reality' was conveyed as existing as a hard, tangible fact, external to individuals. In other words, talk on the 'old' and the 'new' conveyed a sense of *processes/systems/ methods* as existing out there, independently of individuals' awareness of it. The emergence of *processes/systems/methods* in a 'technical' and 'social' sense reinforced this finding. Top Management Team talk on process assumed contingent relationships that had applicability for managing organisations. In other words, Top Management Teams talked about process from a technical interest aimed at achieving order and control.

In the Worker context, talk on process aligned with interpretivist thinking to the extent that what is 'real' was defined by the meanings individuals held towards things. In other words, talk grouped under the themes of 'reactive' and 'pro-active' conveyed a sense of *processes/systems/methods* as socially constructed through the words, symbols and behaviours of organisational members. The emergence of *processes/systems/methods* as pertaining only to 'social' elements supported this finding. Worker talk about process was concerned with action and interaction. In other words, Workers talked about process from a 'social' interest aimed at creating understanding. The strong representation and support for the 'non commitment', 'poor relationships' and 'reactive' themes indicated Workers held substantially more negative than positive views concerning the current 'social' aspects to organising. The overall 'negative' perception of Workers suggested a perceived lack of shared understanding of customer focus between Top Management Teams and Workers.

Strengthening the notion of customer focus in a process sense as pertaining to *servicing* were responses grouped under the label of *change*. As indicated previously, *change* was strongly represented and supported across both the Top Management Team and Worker data in both a structure and process sense. It is the latter context that is of interest to the current discussion.

Change in a process sense was strongly represented and supported across both the Top Management Team and Worker data. Across both data groups, *change* meant a shift from acting in a way that *serviced* 'self interests' to acting in a way that *serviced* 'others' interests'.

As with talk on *change* in a structural sense, words used by Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about *change* in a process sense were similar. The difference in the talk across the two data groups concerned sentiments conveyed by the action of language used. For Top Management Teams, *change* meant a shift from the 'old', 'technical' *processes/systems/methods* that *serviced* 'self interests' to the 'new', 'social' *processes/systems/methods* that *serviced* 'others' interests'. The nature of the talk indicated *change* was achieved by altering organisational processes to bring about different behaviours. Sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under *change* supported the argument that Top Management Team talk was aligned with functionalist thinking.

Workers talk on *change* in a process sense emerged as a more complex phenomenon. *Change* was conveyed as more than merely stopping some behaviours while encouraging others. *Change* emerged as a sense making process in that it was associated with 'non commitment' and 'poor relationships'. In other words, *change* required understanding to bring about the desired actions. Sentiments conveyed by responses grouped under *change* supported the argument that Worker talk was aligned with interpretivist thinking.

COMPARISON OF THE INTERACTION OF THE STRUCTURE OF CUSTOMER FOCUS THEMES

While the words used by Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about customer focus were similar, the meanings attributed to the words emerged different modes of thinking. Comparison of the classified data indicated that Top Management Teams and Workers think about customer focus in both a structure and process sense. Across both data groups, the classified data in terms of structure and

process emerged as strongly relational. The importance of the relationship between the structure and process themes was that it provided a frame of reference for constructing customer focus as practiced by Top Management Teams and as received in practice by Workers. In other words, interaction of structure and process surfaced the more underlying meanings towards the customer focus phenomenon.

The relationship between structure and process from Top Management Team and Worker points of view conveyed a sense of customer focus as pertaining to two broad themes.

In the Top Management Team context, customer focus emerged as pertaining to two themes:

- 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships;
- and
- 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships.

In the Worker context, customer focus also emerged as pertaining to two themes:

- 'closed attitudes' and 'constraining' social relationships;
- and
- 'open attitudes' and 'creating' social relationships.

Comparing the relationships between the two data groups indicated that there were similarities and differences in points of view concerning customer focus. The similarity was that customer focus pertained to two differing types of attitudes and two differing types of relationships. While words spoken by Top Management Teams and Workers were similar, different sentiments were conveyed by these words. The differences in sentiments were interpreted by grounding the categorised data back within the findings generated at the classification phase. Meanings for customer focus at the context of premise, practice and received practice emerged as pertaining to six central arguments. A comparison of the six central arguments follows.

1. Customer focus means thinking and acting in different ways.

In both the Top Management Team and Worker contexts, spoken metaphors on customer focus were associated with two different ways of thinking and acting. For

Top Management Teams, 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships were talked about as conveying sentiments of the 'old', while 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships were talked about as conveying sentiments of the 'new'. For Workers, 'closed attitudes' and 'constraining' social relationships were talked about as conveying sentiments of the 'negative', while 'open attitudes' and 'creating' social relationships were talked about as conveying sentiments of the 'positive'.

While there was an association between thinking and acting in 'old' and 'new' ways for Top Management Teams, and 'negative' and 'positive' ways for Workers, customer focus was strongly aligned with thinking and acting in the 'new' and 'positive' ways respectively. Although responses grouped under the labels 'new' and 'positive' were similar, sentiments conveyed by the talk were different. These differences were made explicit by comparing the remaining five central arguments.

2. Talk of thinking and acting in different ways conveys sentiments of thinking and acting in different ways.

Support for Top Management Team and Worker talk on customer focus as pertaining to thinking and acting in different ways was conveyed by sentiments that indicated Top Management Teams and Workers were actually thinking and acting in different ways. Evidence for Top Management Teams and Workers actually thinking and acting in different ways emerged from responses grouped under a number of categories. Although evidence for thinking and acting in different ways emerged across both data groups, this was more strongly represented across the Top Management Team data. Illustrations that Top Management Teams and Workers were actually thinking and acting in different ways were as follows.

Across both data groups, *customer awareness* under the category **attitudes towards customers** emerged as pertaining to types of interests termed 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. In both contexts, words spoken in talking about *customer awareness* were substantially more of the 'others' interests' type. In other words, the language in-use of both Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about *servicing* conveyed strong sentiments of 'others' interests' in practice.

Across both data groups, sub categories emerged under labels that pertained to process. Sub category labels that pertained to process included *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication*. *Involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication* were actions Top Management Teams associated

with customer focus in a 'new' process sense. In the Worker context, *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication* were actions associated with customer focus in a 'positive' sense. In both contexts, words spoken by Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *communication* conveyed positive evaluations. In other words, the language in-use in talking about customer focus in the 'new' (for Top Management Teams) and the 'positive' (for Workers) conveyed positive sentiments in practice.

3. Talk of thinking and acting in different ways conveys opposing sentiments.

While Top Management Team and Worker talk on customer focus emerged as pertaining to thinking and acting in different ways, the spoken metaphors conveyed sentiments opposing intentions imbued in the former. In the Top Management Team context, talk of 'new' ways of thinking and acting included sequences of contradiction and ambiguity. Across the Worker data, while talk of customer focus pertained to thinking and acting in 'positive' ways, the language in-use strongly indicated 'negative' ways of thinking and acting received in practice. The nature of the different sentiments conveyed by the talk further illustrated a fundamental difference in terms of the frames of reference employed by Top Management Teams and Workers in thinking about customer focus. This difference is discussed as follows.

Central argument three on the interaction of the structure and process themes for Top Management Teams detailed illustrations of ambiguity and contradiction across the customer focus talk. Sequences of ambiguity and contradiction included the following summarised illustrations.

- Talk on *processes/systems/methods* grouped under the theme of 'new' under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

The contradiction rested with the labeling of responses conveying a sense of 'new' actions within a category that was argued at a broader level as pertaining to 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

- Talk on *processes/systems/methods* conveying 'technical' sentiments under the category **finding out about customers**.

Finding out about customers conveyed a sense of an 'open attitude' in that to

service 'others' interests' required knowledge and understanding of customers' needs and wants. *Servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests' was associated with processes concerned with the psychological constitution of and social relations among, individuals who carry out work. However, responses grouped under the category **finding out about customers** pertained principally to quantitative techniques of process. In other words, Top Management Teams talk about *servicing* in the sense of 'others' interests' included responses explicitly conveying sentiments of 'old' *processes/systems/methods*.

- Talk on *standards and performance indicators* in a 'negative' sense under the category **structure of customer focus**.

While Top Management Teams talk about customer focus in a *standards and performance indicators* context as measuring service delivery, the *standards and performance indicators* imposed upon them by government were perceived as *Mickey mouse, quick fix things*. In other words, talk of customer focus as thinking and acting in 'new' ways was ambiguous in context of talk on techniques of process that conveyed 'negative' sentiments.

- Talk on *customer awareness* in a 'negative' sense under the category **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Words spoken by Top Management Teams in talking about *customer awareness* included negative sentiments in terms of customers *not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations*. Negative sentiments about customers reflected a 'closed attitude' in terms of customer focus. In other words, the language in-use of Top Management Teams in talking about *customer awareness* conveyed sentiments of a 'closed attitude' in practice.

Central argument three on the interaction of the structure and process themes for Workers detailed illustrations of 'negative' ways of thinking and acting in practice. 'Negative' ways of thinking and acting included the following summarised illustrations.

- Talk on *customer awareness* in a 'negative' sense under the category **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Words spoken by Workers in talking about *customer awareness* included substantially more negative sentiments about customers. As argued with the Top Management Team data, negative sentiments about customers reflected a 'closed attitude' in terms of customer focus. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *customer awareness* conveyed sentiments of a 'closed attitude' in practice.

- Talk on *service types* in terms of doing a job or task under the category **structure of customer focus**.

Service types emerged as pertaining to types of interests termed 'self interests' and 'others' interests'. *Servicing* 'self interests' was conveyed by words that associated *service types* with doing a job or task. *Servicing* 'others' interests' was conveyed by words that associated *service types* with doing a job or task in context with customer expectations or needs. Words spoken by Workers in talking about *service types* were substantially more of the 'self interests' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *service types* conveyed sentiments of 'self interests' in practice.

- Talk on *processes/systems/methods* in a 'constraining' sense under the category **our understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Processes/systems/methods emerged as pertaining to types of 'social' relationships termed 'constraining' and 'creating'. 'Constraining' relationships emerged under the themes of 'non commitment' and 'poor relationships'. 'Creating' relationships emerged under the themes of 'relationships' and 'commitment'. Words spoken by Workers were substantially more of the 'constraining' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about organisational *processes/systems/methods* conveyed strong sentiments of 'constraining' relationships in practice.

- Talk on *communication and relationships* in a 'negative' sense under the category **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Communication and relationships emerged as pertaining to two types termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Words spoken by Workers were substantially more of the 'negative' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking

about *communication and relationships* conveyed strong sentiments of the 'negative' type in practice.

- Talk on *relationships* grouped under the category **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**.

Relationships emerged as pertaining to two types termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Words spoken by Workers were substantially more of the 'negative' type. In other words, the language in-use of Workers in talking about *relationships* conveyed strong sentiments of the 'negative' type in practice.

- Talk on *standards and performance indicators* in a 'negative' sense under the category **structure of customer focus**.

Standards and performance indicators emerged as pertaining to both quantitative and qualitative processes. Words spoken by Workers in talking about the quantitative *standards and performance indicators* imposed upon them by Top Management Teams indicated that that they were perceived as *ridiculous standards*. The meaning conveyed by the talk was that the technical *standards and performance indicators* required by Top Management Team were perceived by Workers to be of little relevance.

In sum, while the spoken metaphors for both Top Management Teams and Workers was concerned with thinking and acting in different social ways, there was evidence opposing the sentiments conveyed by this talk. Further, the opposing sentiments between the two data groups were different. While Top Management Teams talked of thinking and acting in 'new' ways, this talk included sequences of contradiction and ambiguity. **The created Top Management Team reality emerged as 'old' practices embedded in talk of the 'new' (see Chapter five, Figure 5.5).** While Workers talked of thinking and acting in 'positive' ways, the data was more strongly represented and supported by responses aligned with thinking and acting in 'negative' ways. **The 'negative' emerged as talk and action elements Workers received in practice from Top Management Teams (see Chapter five, Figure 5.12).**

4. Talk of thinking and acting in different ways requires change.

Across both data groups, thinking and acting in different ways was associated with the phenomenon of *change*. Talk of the 'old' and the 'new' by Top Management

Teams, and the 'negative' and the 'positive' by Workers, grounded the notion of *change*. In other words, the 'new' and the 'positive' were a *change* from the 'old' and the 'negative' respectively.

Words used by both Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about *change* were similar. A comparison of the meaning premises enacted by Top Management Teams and Workers (meanings made and meanings taken respectively) in talking about *change* is detailed in Table 5.6.

TABLE 5.6 Comparison of Top Management Teams and Worker Talk on Change

Element requiring change	Top Management Teams	Workers
Thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mindsets/attitudes</i> from the 'negative' to 'positive'. • Perceptions of organisations' <i>purpose and role</i> from the 'old' to the 'new'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mindsets/attitudes</i> from the 'negative' to the 'positive'. • Perceptions of organisations' <i>purpose and role</i> from the 'not shared' and 'talked about' to the 'balancing interests'.
Actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes from 'old' technical relationships that <i>service</i> 'self interests' to 'new' social relationships that <i>service</i> 'others' interests'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes from 'constraining' relationships that <i>service</i> 'self interests' to 'creating' relationships that <i>service</i> 'others' interests'.

While words used by respondents in talking about *change* across both data groups were similar, the nature of *change* as conveyed by this talk was different. These differences grounded the more underlying meanings for *change* as discussed following under comparison of central argument five.

5. Change is shorthand for ... developing social relationships (Top Management Teams) ... creating understanding (Workers).

The more underlying meanings for *change* were constructed from sentiments conveyed by the words used by Top Management Teams and Workers in talking about customer focus.

In the Top Management Team context, *changing* from the 'old' to the 'new' meant performing 'social' actions that *serviced* 'others' interests'. Performing 'social' actions that *serviced* 'others' interests' was achieved by *carrying the thinking out*. Thinking in this context meant the 'open attitude'. In other words, *change* meant altering 'old' technical relationships to 'new' social relationships. In essence, *change* was conveyed as meaning to develop social relationships. In the words of Top Management Teams, social relationships were achieved through processes of *involvement, relationships, communication* and *commitment*.

In the Worker context, *changing* from the 'negative' to the 'positive' emerged as a more complex process. Both the 'positive' and the 'negative' were concerned with 'social' relationships. The 'positive' was conveyed as a 'creating' approach that *serviced* 'others' interests' by way of 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods*. The interaction of structure and process emerged as pertaining to social processes aligned with creating understanding. In the words of Workers, understanding was created through *involvement, building relationships, communication* and *consultation*, with customers.

While words used by respondents in talking about *change* across both data groups were similar, the sentiments conveyed by this talk were different. Both groups talked about *change* as pertaining to 'social' aspects of organisational functioning. Across both data groups, these social aspects were expressed in terms of *involvement, relationships, communication* and *commitment*. However, sentiments conveyed by the talk on *involvement, relationships, communication* and *commitment* were different. Top Management Team talk on *involvement, relationships, communication* and *commitment* conveyed a sense of 'new' forms of action. The essence to 'new' forms of actions rested in its association with control. In contrast, Worker talk on *involvement, relationships, communication* and *commitment* conveyed a sense of 'creating' forms of action. The essence to 'creating' social relations rested in its association with understanding.

6. Talk of ... developing social relationships conveys sentiments of control (Top Management Teams) ... creating understanding conveys sentiments of equivocality (Workers).

The frames of reference informing Top Management Team and Worker talk on customer focus was interpreted from key messages emerging from the data.

The customer focus story in the talk of Top Management Teams was as follows.

- Customer focus is associated with 'new' ways of thinking and acting.
- 'New' ways of thinking are conveyed as an 'open attitude' underpinned by 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* that are aligned with the organisation's 'new' *purpose and role*.
- 'New' ways of acting are conveyed as a 'social' approach which means *servicing* 'others' interests' by way of 'new' *processes/systems/methods*.
- Talk on the 'new' includes sequences of ambiguity and contradiction ('old' practices embedded in talk of the 'new').
- The 'new' requires *change*.
- *Change* means developing 'social' relationships.

The customer focus story in the talk of Workers was as follows.

- Customer focus is associated with 'positive' ways of thinking and acting.
- 'Positive' ways of thinking and acting are conveyed as an 'open attitude' underpinned by 'positive' *mindsets/attitudes* that are aligned with the organisations *purpose and role* in terms of 'balancing interests'.
- 'Positive' ways of acting are conveyed as a 'creating' approach which means *servicing* 'others' interests' by way of 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods*.
- Talk on the 'positive' conveys strong sentiments of 'negative' ways of thinking and acting in practice ('old' practices in talk of the new by Top Management Team is received in practice by Workers).
- The 'positive' requires *change*.
- *Change* means creating understanding.

Top Management Team talk on *changing* the thoughts and actions of organisational members from 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships (the 'old') to 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships (the 'new') conveyed sentiments of control. Further, it was argued that Top Management Teams appeared to be unaware of the

discord between their premise of developing social relationships and their practices of control. That is, Top Management Teams embedded 'old' practices of control in talk of the 'new' was a created reality grounded from their language in-use.

In contrast, Worker talk on *changing* the thoughts and actions of organisational members from 'closed attitudes' and 'constraining' relationships (the 'old') to 'open attitudes' and 'creating' relationships (the 'new') conveyed sentiments of a lack of shared understanding between Top Management Teams and themselves. That is, Top Management Teams unaware practices of the 'old' embedded in talk of the 'new' were received in practice by Workers as equivocal. In other words, the data demonstrably supports the notion that there was a lack of shared meanings towards customer focus between Top Management Teams and Workers.

In summary, Top Management Teams viewed customer focus from an 'old' versus 'new' frame of reference. Talk on the 'old' and the 'new' indicated customer focus was perceived as existing out there, independent of individuals' awareness to it. Talk of achieving the 'new' by altering the thoughts and actions of organisational members conveyed a concern for order and control. In other words, Top Management Team talked about customer focus from a technical point of view that serviced their own interests. In contrast, Workers tended to view customer focus evaluatively from a 'positive' versus 'negative' frame of reference. Workers evaluative frame of reference conveyed *change* in terms of a sense making process. This sense making sentiment was illustrated by talk on *purpose and role* as being either 'not shared' and 'talked about' versus 'balancing interests'.

The difference in the frames of reference interpreted from Top Management Team and Worker talk was further illustrated by comparing sentiments conveyed by the words spoken. Top Management Teams practiced customer focus from a control point of view. Their talk emerged in a technical sense concerned with the phenomenon of *change*. Further, Top Management Teams appeared to be unaware of the contradiction between their premise of customer focus in terms of developing social relationships and their practice of control. In contrast, Worker talk emerged in a practical sense concerned with the phenomenon of understanding. Worker talk indicated that the Top Management Team practice of 'old' ways of thinking and acting in talk of the 'new' was received in practice. Customer focus created equivocality for Workers.

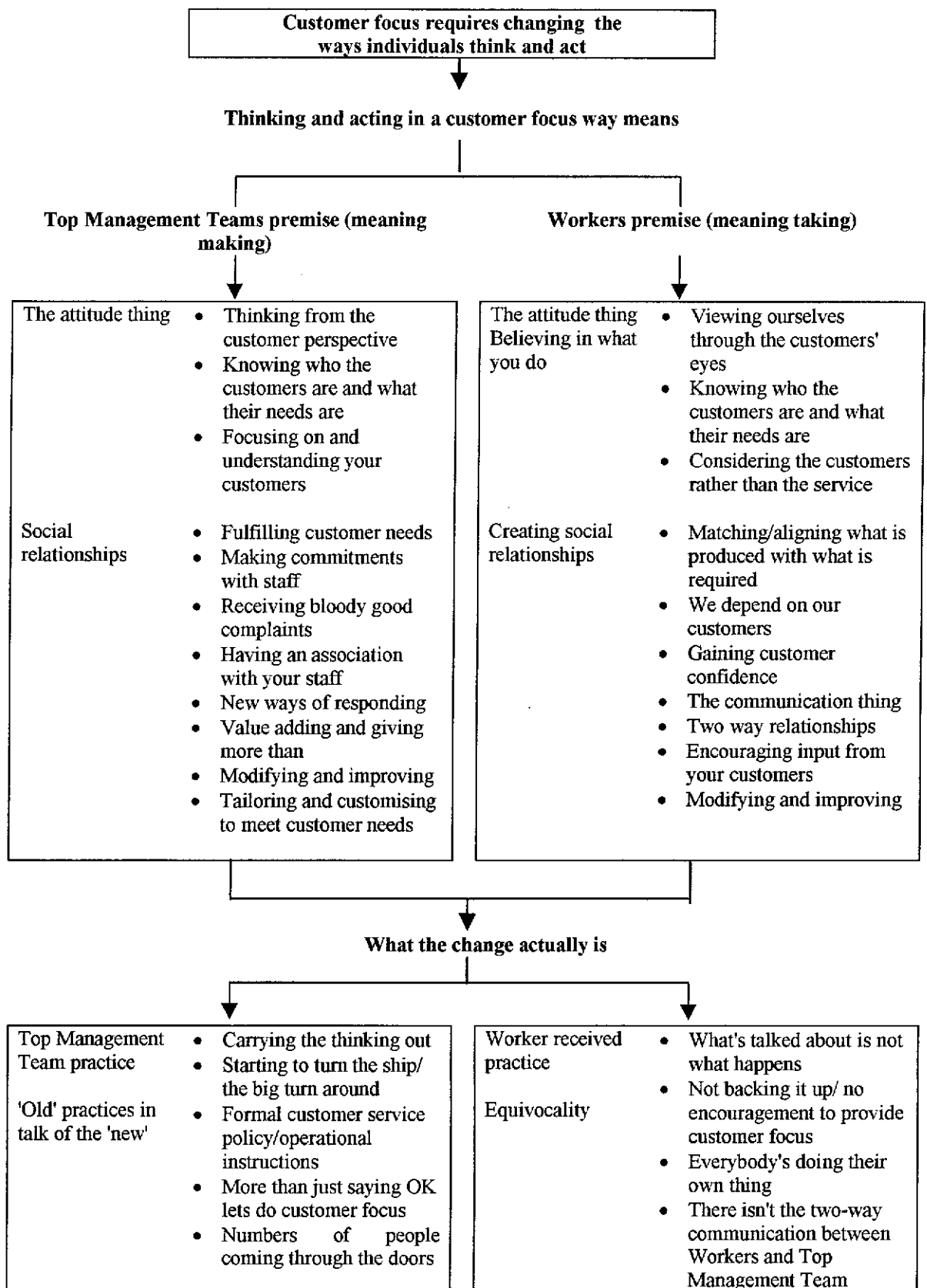
Top Management Team talk on customer focus suggested that they perceived themselves as the controllers of the organisational values (in the sense of *purpose and role*). In contrast, Worker talk suggested they perceived themselves as the implementers of the organisational values.

As implementers of the corporate values, the Worker data indicated sense making to be an essential element in operationalising Top Management Team talk. However, the data indicated that while Top Management Teams talk strongly about 'new' ways of thinking and acting, Workers received practice was equivocality arising from talk of the 'new' in context with 'old' practices. In other words, the strongly supported Worker talk of 'non commitment', 'poor relationships', 'not shared' and 'talked about' signaled a lack of shared meanings on customer focus between themselves and Top Management Teams.

Summary

A summary of the sentiments conveyed by Top Management Team and Worker talk on customer focus is detailed in Figure 6.3. The figure summarises the major themes identified from analysis of the data across both data groups.

FIGURE 6.3: Comparison of Meanings for the Customer Focus Phenomenon for Top Management Teams and Workers.



The essence of Figure 6.3 is summarised in the following way.

Essentially, customer focus emerged as a communicative phenomenon. Top Management Team and Worker talk on customer focus was consistent. Customer focus related to **attitudes towards customer, customer understanding of ourselves as providers, and our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Top Management Teams and Workers talked about customer focus in terms of thinking and acting in 'social' ways. 'Social' ways included the phenomena of *involvement, commitment, relationships* and *communication*.

While talk about customer focus in terms of thinking and acting in 'social' ways was consistent, Top Management Team and Worker perceptions of what they do was inconsistent. Top Management Teams' perceptions of what they do was closely aligned with talk on what they say they do. In essence, perceptions of what Top Management Teams do as indicated by the Top Management Team data was *carrying the thinking out*. *Carrying the thinking out* meant thinking and acting in 'social' ways. In contrast, Worker perceptions of what they do substantially opposed the sentiments conveyed by their talk about customer focus. Perceptions of what organisations do emerged under themes labelled as 'non commitment', 'poor relationships', 'not shared' and 'talked about'.

Insights into the way Top Management Teams and Workers operationalise what they think was gained from interpreting the relationship between talk on what they say they do and perceptions of what they do. Top Management Team talk suggested a technical interest with customer focus that was concerned with control. Control was indicated by the data in terms of *change* from 'old', 'technical' ways to 'new', 'social' ways. Worker talk suggested a practical interest in customer focus motivated by understanding. The Worker data indicated changing from 'negative', 'reactive' ways to 'positive', 'creating' ways, created understanding.

The sequences of contradiction and ambiguity across the Top Management Team data strengthened the argument that technical interests guided their customer focus talk. In contrast, the Worker data conveyed a sense of equivocality. Equivocality supported the argument that practical interests motivated Worker customer focus talk. The ambiguity and contradiction in Top Management Team talk was aligned with the equivocality conveyed in the Worker received practice. In particular, the old practices embedded in Top Management Team talk of the 'new' was received in practice by Workers as equivocality. In other words, the alignment was a lack of shared meanings towards the customer focus phenomenon.

The interpretation formed from analysis of the data indicated Top Management Teams and Workers organising experiences as grounded through a lens of customer focus were not aligned. A technical interest for control contrasted against a practical interest for understanding. This finding embraces a shared understanding for the way things were in context. This is a more meaningful interpretation than considering the 'what is said is done' and the 'what is received in practice' contexts in isolation. From Hodder's (1998:115) perspective, viewing language as material culture, the difference between the enacted premise and received practice contexts constituted differing paradigmatic choices.

CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The study has, in detail, crafted a schema for understanding the relationship between what organisations say they do and what they are perceived to do: the premise-to-received practice. The study has navigated its way through an exhaustive volume of relevant work on organisation and organising. The case was argued for adoption of the symbolic interpretive paradigmatic perspective in investigating enacted premise and received practice contexts. A research design in putting the paradigmatic assumptions into motion was applied. Finally, the study reported on interpretations emerging from analysis of lived experiences from the two organisational contexts under investigation.

Key elements to the study have been summarised under the headings of Premise-to-Received Practice Relationship, Typology for Interpreting Meanings, Research Approach and Analysis of Data.

PREMISE-TO-RECEIVED PRACTICE RELATIONSHIP

Weick's (1969) enactment perspective provided the basis for framing the intentions to actions relationships. The action of talk and practice presents to the observer enacted episodes in a flow of organising experiences. The research act was aimed at investigating the meanings attributed to enactments of Top Management Teams and Workers. Specifically, how the meaning making (enacted premise) and action (practice) contexts of Top Management Teams were received in practice by Workers. By bracketing the talk and practice episodes for Top Management Teams and Workers, two enacted environments were construed. These environments were the outputs to organising. Each enacted environment was assumed to be comprised of different discernible contexts that could be subject to closer attention. Two contexts of interest for this study were Top Management Teams enacted premise (intentions) and Worker received practice (actions).

Argyris (1976) provided an avenue for explaining and investigating the apparent contradiction between espoused intentions and organisational practices. While Argyris explained the notion of action from an interpretive point of view, implicit assumptions underlying his reasoning suggested a functionalist bias. Adopting the premise of organisations as cognitive enterprises, Argyris (1976) explained

organisational events through understanding the cognitive functions individuals use in making the external world manageable and controllable.

Argyris' work was made relevant to the study by contextualising his two theories of action. In Argyris' perspective, individuals possess espoused theories and theories in-use. Espoused theories are what people say they do while the in-use are theories individuals use to inform actions taken. In-use theories inform action taken, they are not the actual actions themselves. Essentially, Argyris views meaning making and interpretation as residing within the minds of individuals.

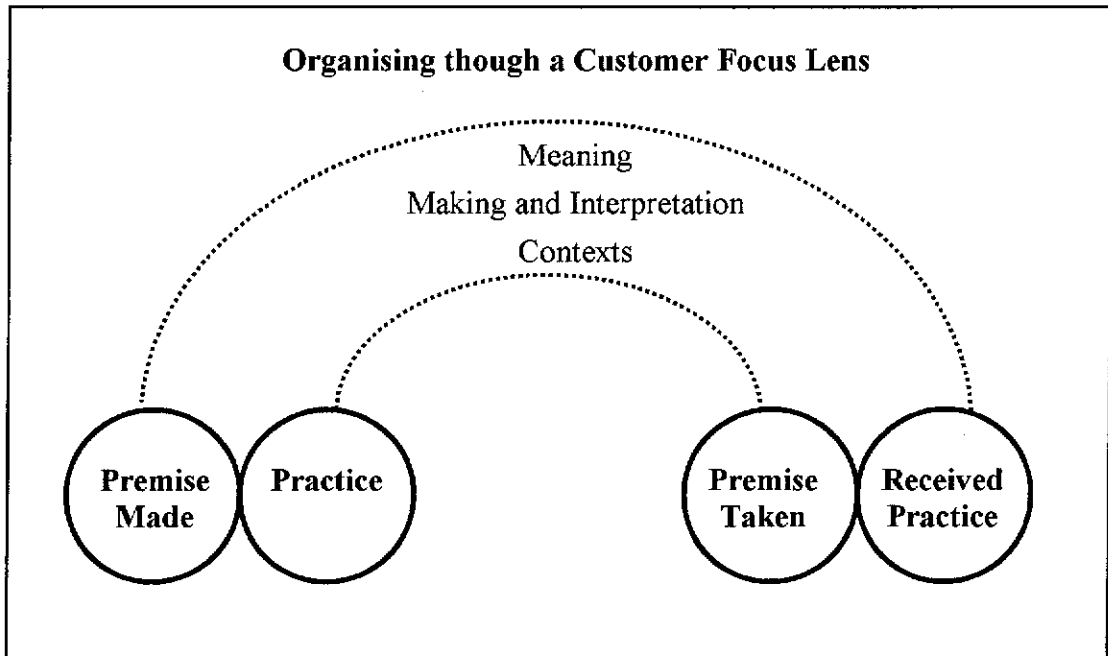
A different perspective presented was that of Whiteley (1997) who explained the relationship between espoused and practice on the assumption that meaning making and interpretation was a shared, public phenomenon. Rather than viewing the locus for meaning making and interpretation within the minds of individuals, Whiteley located these processes with individuals' relatedness with one another. Meaning making and interpretation was ordered hierarchically, created and reproduced through interaction.

Whiteley's (1997) schema, based on a contextual view of organising, stimulated thinking on espoused and in-use, not as separate states of consciousness (Argyris, 1976), but as relational, co-existing organisational contexts. It was on this contextual basis that the premise-to-received practice was conceptualised. However, rather than assume a hierarchy of meanings within individuals, the premise-to-received practice assumed two separate, identifiable, organisational contexts. In this sense, interpretation was not taken as imposing structure in the sense of a hierarchy of meanings, but as translating events and developing frameworks for understanding. Consequently, customer focus, as metaphor for organising, was made understandable from the meanings attributed to it from the enacted premise and received practice organisational contexts.

In summary, a way of conceptualising the premise-to-received practice relationship that integrates the thinking of Argyris (1976) and Whiteley (1997), is detailed in Figure 7.1. The premise, practice, and received practice contexts are informed by the thinking of Argyris (1976). Enacted premise is the meaning making context espoused by Top Management Teams, while premise taken is the meaning making context espoused by Workers. These are separate organisational contexts as opposed to separate states of consciousness. The relational nature of meaning making and interpretation is informed by the thinking of Whiteley (1997). Meanings are inter-

subjectively created and reproduced, and exist across different organisational contexts as opposed to a hierarchy system within the minds of individuals.

FIGURE 7.1: A model for Conceiving Premise and Received Practice Organisational Contexts



Informed by Argyris (1976) and Whiteley (1997).

TYPOLOGY FOR INTERPRETING MEANINGS

Chapter two illustrated differences in thinking on organisation and organising on the basis of assumptions, latent or otherwise, emerging from literature relevant to the study. Using this thinking, the study presented an 'assumptive context' on which to interpret meanings attributed to individuals' language in-use. The assumptive context grouped different ideas on organisation and organising under two frames, functionalism and interpretivism. The study posited that language in-use, gathered from differing organisational contexts, provided a medium for gaining insights into assumptions informing actions taken.

RESEARCH APPROACH

As the study was concerned with generating understanding on the meanings for organising through a customer focus lens, the research approach was interpretive.

An explicit assumption embedded within the premise-to-received practice relationship was the notion that enacted premise resided with Top Management

Teams and received practice with Workers. The assumption was grounded in the literature (Pescosolido, 2001, Isabella, 1990; Daft and Weick, 1984; Smircich and Morgan, 1982) which suggested managers serve a significant function in organisations in the sense that they frame meaning for other organisational members. The received practice represented what is actually accomplished through the processes of organising; an assumed function of Workers. Implicit in the assumption is the notion that Workers "surrender their ability to define their reality to others" (Smircich and Morgan, 1982:270).

Given the study's interest in understanding the premise-to-received practice processes of organising through a customer focus lens, the research design was characterised as a 'critical inquiry' approach. From this perspective, the assumed organisational status quo was questioned by investigating both the surface and more underlying meanings in organisational reality. In addition, the voices of Top Management Teams and Workers were treated equally in the pursuit for understanding of customer focus based on "in situ, member-generated concepts" (Mumby, 1988).

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Bounding the study within the assumptive context described above, data was collected and interpreted through a critical lens. Pursuing a demanding analytic approach, data collected from Top Management Teams and Workers was constantly compared and contrasted using a four phase "qualitative content analysis" (Byers and Wilcox, 1991) approach. First, the data was fractionalised into thought units, commencing with word-by-word analysis and ending with whole phrase analysis. Second, member-generated categories were established which provided insights into what customer focus means in both the premise and received practice contexts. Third, the member-generated categories were classified on the basis of unifying themes to which the data appeared to be pertaining. Having categorised and classified the data for each context separately, a discussion of findings across both contexts was made - phase four.

The data indicated that both Top Management Teams and Workers attributed the same surface meanings towards the phenomenon of customer focus. These meanings were surface in the sense they represented what Top Management Teams and Workers take for granted in getting work accomplished.

In both Top Management Team premise made and Worker premise taken, the spoken metaphors for customer focus pertained to thinking and acting in different ways. Thinking in different ways was encapsulated in respondents' talk of the *attitude thing*. Acting in a different ways was encapsulated in respondents' talk of *involvement, commitment, communication and relationships*. For both contexts, thinking and acting in different ways required *change*.

The more underlying meanings on the way Top Management Teams and Workers operationalise what they think was interpreted from findings generated at the classification phase of data analysis. Thinking and acting in different ways for Top Management Teams conveyed a sense of *change* in terms of developing social relationships. As argued in Chapter five, *change* in the Top Management Team context meant altering 'old' technical relationships to 'new' social relationships. The action metaphors conveyed a strong sense of control. In summary, Top Management Team talked about *changing* the way individuals think and act from a technical interest framed by control.

In contrast, thinking and acting in different ways for Workers conveyed a sense of *change* in terms of creating understanding. As argued in Chapter five, *change* in the Worker context meant altering 'closed attitudes' and 'technical' relationships to 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships. The action metaphors conveyed a strong sense of equivocality. In summary, Workers talked about *changing* the way individuals think and act from a practical interest framed by creating understanding. The received practice was discord with Top Management Teams enacted premise.

Archaeologically speaking, the surface artifacts of *involvement, commitment, communication, and relationships* found on the customer focus dig have, when placed in the lived contexts of their existence, yielded different symbolic representations. *Involvement, commitment, communication, and relationships* in the enacted premise context implied changing the way individuals do things (control). *Involvement, commitment, communication, and relationships* in the received practice context implied changing the way individuals are (understanding).

Relationship between the study findings and the literature

The study's findings are consistent with the findings of others (Rose, 1988; Euske and Roberts, 1987; Masuch, 1985) in the sense that action is achieved in the absence

of uniformly shared meanings and interpretations across organisational contexts. As illustrated in Chapter one, the organisational discourse is infused with observations where organisation intentions are not aligned with its practice.

Rose (1988), for example, in studying the coordinated management of meanings, uses the example of regular "open meetings" between managers and workers to discuss "worker gripes" to identify different cultures within organisation and for contextualising the complex interaction between them. He suggests how perceptions of agreement may be created between group members when in actuality disagreement exists. "Agreements could be reflective of generally shared cultural knowledge within an organisation ... however there are disagreements at higher levels of context, the relationship level and subculture pattern level, reflecting cultural diversity" (Rose, 1988:161).

Mitchell (et al, 1986:310) suggest that differences between organisations' intentions and actions are a consequence of not adequately communicating the organisation's image as explained following.

"An organisation's belief that says, 'the customer is always right' forms the legitimate basis for certain internally consistent patterns of behaviour ... It may be the case that many organisations espouse such beliefs, but observations may reveal that espousal does not carry over to actual behaviour, making one question whether the espoused belief is actually part of the organisation's self-image, or if the belief is in fact part of the image, whether that image has been adequately communicated to the appropriate levels of the organisation".

In the study context, Mitchell (et al, 1986) assertion is relevant when communication is taken to mean the very process by which organising is accomplished. An implication drawn is that premise does not carry over to actual behaviour (received practice) in the absence of a negotiated shared understanding on the way actions are to be accomplished; that is, in the absence of shared frames of reference underlying organisational action. As this study has found, the surface artifacts of *involvement*, *commitment*, *communication*, and *relationships* convey different symbolic representations depending upon the frame of reference in-use.

The study's findings suggest a non-alignment in the premise-to-received practice relationship.

Conclusions

Conclusions are considered in context of the four research questions guiding the study.

1. What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Top Management Team enacted premise?

The enacted customer focus premise (Top Management Teams surface meanings) was concerned with the phenomena of *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *understanding*. Customer focus was associated with thinking and acting in 'new' ways. 'New' ways meant having an 'open attitude' towards and developing 'social' relationships with, customers.

Top Management Teams not only talked, they also acted. Top Management Teams more underlying meanings at the level of practice were concerned with the phenomenon of control. Control emerged from Top Management Team talk about *change*. Customer focus was associated with *changing* 'old', 'closed attitudes' and 'technical relationships' to 'new', 'open attitudes' and 'social' relationships. *Change* in a customer focus sense was shorthand for developing 'social' relationships. Control emerged in terms of 'old' practices in talk of the 'new'. In other words, there were elements of 'technical' relationships in practice couched in the talk of 'social' relationships. The practices created by Top Management Teams in the organising process served as further enactments available for attention. **However, it was evident that Top Management Teams were unaware of the discord between the way they say they think and the way they operationalise what they think.**

2. What are the meanings embedded in the customer focus context: Worker received practice?

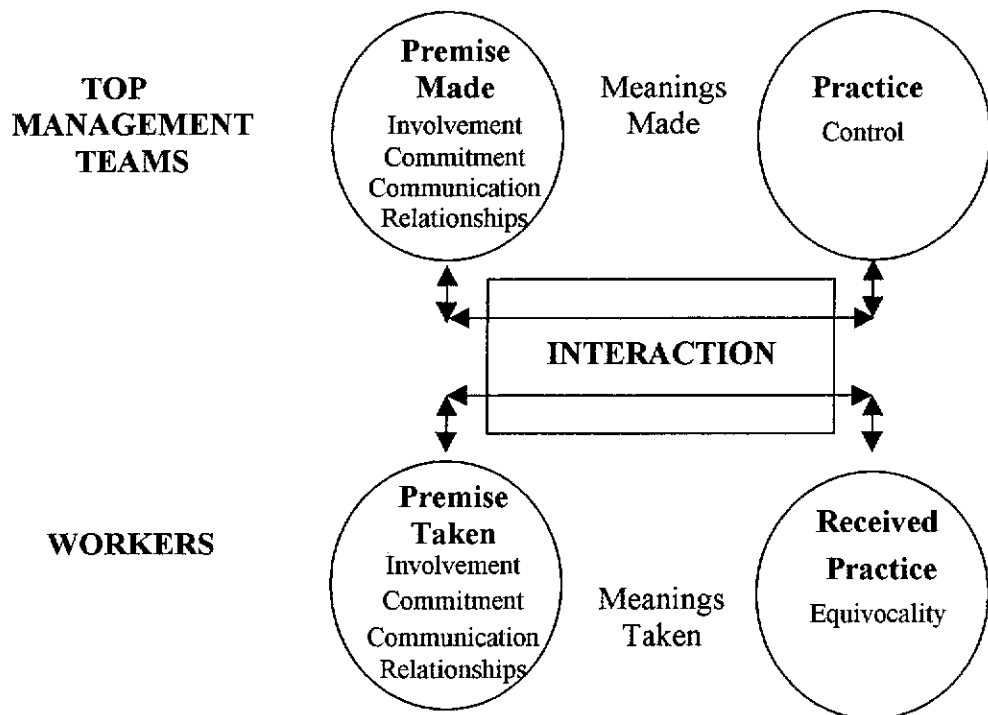
The premise meanings taken by Workers to customer focus were concerned with the phenomena of *involvement*, *commitment*, *relationships* and *understanding*. Customer focus was associated with thinking and acting in 'positive' ways. 'Positive' ways meant having an 'open attitude' towards and 'creating' social relationships with, customers.

Workers more underlying meanings at the level of received practice were embedded with equivocality. Equivocality emerged from Worker talk about *change*. Customer focus was associated with *changing* the 'negative', 'closed attitudes' and 'constraining' social relationships to the 'positive', 'open attitudes' and 'creating' social relationships. *Change* in a customer focus sense was shorthand for 'creating' understanding. Equivocality emerged from talk about customer focus as being 'not shared', 'talked about', 'poor relationships' and 'non commitment'. **These elements collectively conveyed equivocality in the sense that there was a perceived lack of shared meanings on customer focus between themselves and Top Management Teams.**

3. What is the alignment in meanings between the enacted premise and received practice contexts?

Conclusions drawn on the premise-to-received practice relationship are based on the interaction centred schema for understanding premise and received practice contexts of reality developed in Chapter three (see Figure 3.3). Conclusions are depicted in Figure 7.2.

FIGURE 7.2: Conclusions Drawn in Grounding the Premise-to-Received Practice relationship



Viewing the processes of organising as customer focusing, there were differences in the organisational 'realities' between the contexts of premise and received

practiced. What on the surface emerged as a collective sense for action was, at the more underlying level of 'reality', a condition of inequality perpetuating a historical dominant ideology.

4. What understandings emerge from the study to assist concerned change agents interested in aligning organisational intentions and actions?

For both Top Management Teams and Workers, customer *focusing* emerged as thinking and acting in social ways. Thinking and acting in social ways meant *change*. In other words, organising through a customer focus lens meant *change*. Top Management Teams enacted premise for *change* was associated with new forms of control under the labels of *involvement*, *commitment*, *communication*, and *relationships*. Workers premise taken for *change* was associated with new forms of understanding, also under the labels of *involvement*, *commitment*, *communication*, and *relationships*.

Top Management Teams and Workers did not think differently in what they say they think. However, the way respondents operationalise what they think demonstrated that there were differences in the frames of reference informing action taken. In other words, Top Management Teams and Workers *per se* were not seen to be in discord, rather it was the frames of reference informing their language in-use.

This study adopted meaning making and interpretation to be essentially a symbolic process, created and reproduced through interaction (Smircich, 1983b). Customer *focusing* was only accepted at a surface context with no corresponding shift in the more underlying contexts of meaning.

Top Management Team operationalised thinking assumed a self centred, rational and means-end approach to organising that conveyed a technical interest for control. The enactments of premise and practice were available for further attention. Top Management Teams were unaware of the discord between what they say they think and the way they operationalise what they think.

Workers' operationalised thinking manifested equivocality that conveyed a practical interest concerned with understanding. The discord between Top Management Teams premise and practice symbolically created the equivocality received in practice by Workers. In other words, the content for Worker

equivocality aligned with Top Management Teams technical practices couched in talk of the social. In Workers words - *what's talked about is not what happens // [Top Management Teams] are not backing it up // there's no encouragement to provide customer focus // everybody's doing their own thing // there isn't the two-way communication between Workers and Top Management Team.*

The customer focus program was launched by the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO) to signal a change in the way government intended to do its business in the future. PSMO set a number of performance indicators which agencies were required to report on. It was evident from the study that PSMO itself talked in a way that conveyed a 'new' sense of organising. The talk in practice emerged as 'technical' under talk of 'social'. In short, PSMO's reform strategy was incomplete in the sense that while customer focus was concerned in a structural sense with *mindsets/attitudes* (and in particular, changing *mindsets/attitudes*), the processes for achieving this *change* was based on 'old' practices in talk of the 'new'. Jermier (1998:235:235) supports this view in positing:

"Recent technological changes, managerial innovations [customer focus], and organisational experiments - many of which have been hailed as revolutionary or paradigm breaking in both the academic and popular press - are merely fads. They have received great fanfare largely because they disguise control in rhetoric of emancipation and, therefore, seem more humanistic".

Conclusions drawn from the discussion are that:

- i) there was harmony in the premise thinking on the meaning for customer focus across Top Management Teams and Workers.
- ii) the harmony in the premise thinking on the meaning for customer focus across the two groups was discordant with the way they operationalise what they think. Top Management Teams were unaware of the discord between the way they say they think and the way they operationalise what they think. This discord emerged as 'old' practices couched in talk of the 'new'. The discord between talk and practice in Top Management Teams created the equivocality received in practice by Workers. Further, the created equivocality received in practice was discord with Workers premise taken for customer focus as to create shared understanding.

In sum, the construed Top Management Team unaware practice of the 'old' in talk of the 'new' was received in practice by Workers. Workers acted on the meanings taken from Top Management Teams. They did not act on the meaning making of Top Management Teams (which Top Management Teams do for themselves). In other words, Top Management Teams spoken metaphors of developing social relationships and unaware action metaphors of control, were received in practice by Workers which, in turn, created equivocality.

The study's conclusions reinforce the belief of others that:

- within organisations there are often ways of seeing (Isabella, 1990; Morgan and Smircich, 1980) or multiple imaginings (Harrison, 2000); and
- within these models there are often varying contexts of meaning.

This study has demonstrated a number of important phenomenon for concerned change agents to consider when investigating the alignment between organisational intentions and actions.

First, understanding the premise-to-received practice relationship requires investigation of the processes of organising from a multiple of perspectives. What organisations say they do is the responsibility of Top Management Teams. What organisations are perceived to do is the responsibility of Workers. This study has shown that focusing solely on Top Management Team perceptions of what they say they think and the way they operationalise what they think provided only a partial description of actual organising experiences.

Second, the study has shown that the frames of reference for perceiving organisational phenomena through the eyes of Top Management Teams and Workers are not aligned. Top Management Teams adopted a frame of reference primarily concerned with control. Workers, on the other hand, adopted a frame of reference concerned with understanding. These two frames provided different interpretations for customer focus. However, these frames also provide a foundation for reducing the equivocality in explaining the interpreted non-alignment between organisational intentions and practices. Gergen and Thatchenkery (1996) support this approach in that it sensitizes individuals to their participation in constituting their world, thus emphasizing the potential for communally organized change in understanding, and thus action.

Third, the study has demonstrated the usefulness of language as an artifact for interpreting the underlying meanings informing organisational actions. Language not only serves as a medium for understanding what individuals think, it also serves as a means for explaining the way individuals operationalise what they think.

This study supports the conclusions of others (Pescosolido, 2001; Whiteley, 1995; Isabella, 1990; Berg, 1985; Smircich, 1983b) that improved managerial performance is achieved by managing the frames of reference, or meaning systems, through which work is accomplished. Top Management Teams premise and practice are reciprocally related which serve as enactments that become available for further attention. In this study, Top Management Teams were unaware of the discord between their premise and practice; between the way they say they think and the way they operationalise what they think. That is, Top Management Teams did not attend to their own practices. In contrast, both the premise and practice enactments of Top Management Teams were attended to by Workers which created the equivocality received in practice. Improved managerial performance can be accomplished through interpretive understanding of the relational nature of premise-to-received practice and by working to achieve shared systems of meaning.

While previous research indicates that most culture change efforts proceed with little attention to the pluralistic reality of most modern organizations (Detert, *et al.*, 2000), this study has articulated an approach to investigate the relational nature of meaning making and interpretation in two principal ways. The interpretive thrust of the premise-to-received practice schema allows investigation into the ways Top Management Teams understand their context and experience, and how they communicate that understanding amongst themselves and to others (Gioia and Thomas, 1996). More importantly, it allows investigation into how that understanding is received in practice by Workers.

Further research agenda

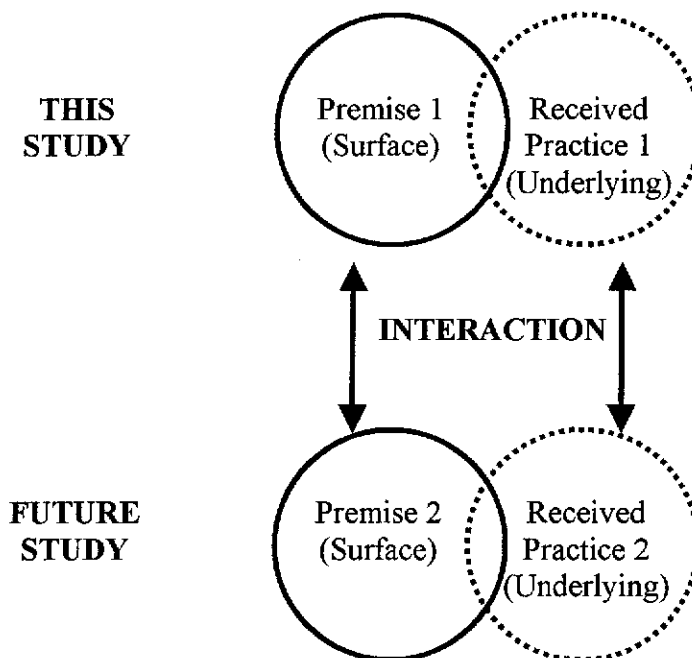
Chapter five reported on the emergence of "people love working for this organisation" as metaphor Workers associated with customer focus. This metaphor would be a fruitful one to emerge contingent data on customer focus.

A future study would accentuate the received practice context as a fit with managers' enacted premise context. Such an approach would further ground the critical ontological position. In other words, by adopting the lens of "people love working

for this organisation" as the topic for inquiry, the apparent organisational 'status quo' (Gray, *et al*, 1985; Burrell and Morgan, 1979) would be further questioned.

In conceptualising the processes of organising through a customer focus lens, the alignment between the premise and received practice (surface to underlying) is consistent with Morgan's (1980) optimal type position for creating powerful imagery. A future study would plausibly investigate the recreated 'realities' of the received practice-to-premise, based on a practical interest in understanding the interaction between surface and underlying meanings. In a future study context, the underlying received practice as surfaced in the sense of "people love working for this organisation" would be the lens for investigating the alignment between Worker received practice and Top Management Team premise - see Figure 7.3.

FIGURE 7.3: Further Inquiry for Grounding the Premise-to-Received Practice relationship



In other words, a future study aim would be in investigating the alignment between Workers practical interests (Smircich and Calás, 1987) and Top Management Team premise.

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Graduate School of Business

**Customer focus: Enacted premise and received practice
(Volume II - Appendices)**

John O'Donnell Dixon

**This thesis is presented as part of the
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Appendix 7: Thick descriptions of Worker categories and sub categories.....	G1-G71
Appendix 8: Number of instances (thought units) comprising categories and sub categories from both the Top Management Team and Worker data.....	H1-H2

APPENDIX 1

LETTER OF INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDY FROM PAUL SCHAPPER, CHIEF EXECUTIVE, PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT OFFICE

MINUTE TO CHIEF EXECUTIVE

STUDY INTO THE ADOPTION OF CUSTOMER FOCUS ACROSS THE WESTERN AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC SECTOR

Purpose

I am writing to seek your Agency's participation in an external research project supported by the PSMO in looking into the effects of customer focus implementation in the public sector.

The project will be conducted by John Dixon as part of his doctoral studies at Curtin University. John works with Agriculture Western Australia as part of a Business Services Team which provides advice and support in encouraging a commercial orientation to Agency functioning.

Background

As you are aware, the Customer Focus program was launched for the Premier by the Public Sector Management Office (PSMO) to ensure that as part of the Government's change agenda the public sector continuously works to improve the level of customer service required to enhance service delivery, and provide a value for money service for the community.

This study will investigate the degree of commitment to Customer Focus across the public sector by researching changes within the cultural of public sector agencies. The study, together with the more quantitative measures already in use, will provide a more complete picture of how customer focus is practiced across government.

Implications for Participating Agencies

In your agency participating in this project John will:

- conduct a focus interview in early December with the agency's senior management team responsible for planning and implementing the Customer Focus Program;
- access relevant Customer Focus documentation provided by the agency; and
- conduct between five and ten one hour focus interviews with groups of four representative workers between March to May 1997.

Attached is an overview of the method which will be used.

I hope you will agree to participate in this study and thank you for your continued support of the customer focus program.

Paul Schapper
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

26 November 1996

Appendix 1 - Attachment to the letter of invitation

Overview of the Research Method

The research is concerned with investigating the level of match between what is said is done concerning Customer Focus and what is actually done.

The study seeks answers to the following questions.

- i) What are the meanings implied in the espoused Customer Focus program as prescribed by PSMO?
- ii) How has Customer Focus been interpreted by public sector agencies "top management teams" responsible for implementation of the program - *the espoused?*
- iii) What is Customer Focus in practice from the perspective of those implementing the program, or in other words, public sector employees - *the practiced?*
- iv) What is the "match" with *what is said* concerning Customer Focus and *what is done* across public sector agencies?

Method

The primary data collection technique will be through focus interviews. Focus interviews are useful when it comes to investigating *what* individuals think, but they excel at uncovering *why* participants think as they do. They also permit the opportunity to see "processes" in place, which is a critical issue for the case at hand.

The research aims to generate understanding through collection of the PSMO, agencies top management teams and public servant perceptions on the Customer Focus innovation.

The top management team data will provide insight into how the espoused initiative of the PSMO is internalised within the sample agencies. The representative worker data will provide insight into how Customer Focus is practiced within the agencies. Interviews will be conducted with approximately 200 workers across six sample agencies.

Comparative analysis between the top management and representative worker data will provide evidence on the match between what agencies say they do and what agencies actually do.

Data collection

Data will be collected using the following approaches.

1. Desk Audits: on PSMO and public sector agencies Customer Focus documentation.
2. In depth interviews: with those creating the vision for the desired future state of the organisation - agencies top management teams.
3. Focus interviews: with those responsible for implementation of the change - public sector employees.

Ethical issues

The research will involve the acquisition of data in the form of worker perspectives across a number of public sector agencies. Participants in the focus interviews may view the collection and use of this data as invasive. An issue of concern for participants will be on how the data is to be used and confidentiality of the source. Participants will be advised the purpose of the research is to identify major themes concerning Customer Focus. Reporting of the major themes will be in such a way so as to maintain the anonymity of the source.

The research will comply with the "Code of Ethical Practice" and "Code of Conduct" in the publication 'Curtin University of Technology: Handbook of Guidelines and Regulations for Degrees by Research' (1994).

APPENDIX 2

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TOP MANAGEMENT TEAMS

The following six questions are the basis for the focus groups for all six Top Management Team interviews.

- 1 **What does Customer Focus mean to you?**
 - Can you give me an example/ situation?**Best aspects of customer focus**
Worst aspects of customer focus.

- 2 **What do you perceive is customer focus from the whole of government perspective?**
What do you think of PSMO in terms of customer focus?
 - Explain - why/why not

- 3 **What to you are the features/characteristics of an excellent customer focused organisation?**
 - What would you expect to be going on in an organisations that was extremely well regarded for being customer focused**Would you describe this agency as a customer focused organisation?**
 - Explain - why/why not

- 4 **Can you describe one experiences that you feel demonstrates how you are good at being customer focused?**
 - What happened?

- 5 **Can you think of an experience where afterwards you thought I need improve my customer focus performance in this area?**
 - What didn't happen.
 - What would have you expected to happen. What would have you liked to happen.

- 6 **How has Customer Focus been communicated across this agency?**

APPENDIX 3

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR WORKERS

The following questions are the basis for all 55 worker individual interviews. Questioning is asked in two parts.

PART 1

- 1 What does Customer Focus mean to you?**
 - Can you give me an example/ situation.**Best aspects of customer focus**
Worst aspects of customer focus.

- 2 What do you think of this agencies Top Management Team in terms of its customer focus?**
 - Explain - why/why not

- 3 Would you describe this agency as a customer focused organisation?**
 - Explain - why/why not

PART 2

SUB SECTION 1

For each of the following three cards, respondents to provide answers to three questions:

1. What does this statement mean to you?
2. Do you see this as something valued around this organisation? (explain/ why do you say its valued).
3. What does this mean in practice?

**Providing value added
experiences for our
customers**

**Changing our attitudes
towards our customers**

**Changing the experience
with our customers**

SUB SECTION 2

For each of the following seven cards, respondents to provide answers to two questions.

1. What is the talk/ what is said about - with regard to card?
2. What actually goes on around here/ what does the card turn out to be in practice?

Vision/Purpose

Involvement/ Relationships

**Deciding what to do/
Balancing things**

**Measuring/
Improvement**

**Learning/
Understanding**

Carrying the thinking out

**Living Customer
Focus**

SUB SECTION 3

Using the following five cards, respondents to provide answers to nine questions.

1. Which one is the most important to you?
2. What does it (the word) mean to you?
3. Why is it the most important to you?
4. From what you see going on around this place, which one of the five appears to be the most valued by the organisation?

5. (If different to question 1) What does it (the word) mean?
6. Why do you say it is the most valued?
7. Which one describes this organisation/ what label would you hang out the front to describe this organisation.
8. What does it (the word) mean.
9. Why do you say it is the most valued

Servicing

Conservative

Autocratic

Scientific

Bureaucratic

SUB SECTION 4

Using the following six cards, respondents to provide answers to three questions.

1. Give me a couple of sentences to explain to me what each phrase means to you?
2. Pick three which are said to be valued most, the talk.
3. Pick three which in practice are valued most, what actually goes on around this place?

Serving customer needs

Serving self interests

Involvement/ relationships

Standards, rules & regulations

Learning & understanding

Perfect score sheet

APPENDIX 4

EXTRACT OF THOUGHT UNITS ACROSS THE WORKER DATA GROUPED UNDER CATEGORY D - OUR KNOWLEDGE OF OURSELVES AS PROVIDERS

Chapter four detailed the four phase qualitative content analysis used in study. Following is an extract of Worker thoughts units grouped under Category 4 **our understanding of ourselves as providers** from the 55 interviews conducted.

Thought units are grouped under category names and themes to which the ideas pertained (printed in capitals). Major sub categories grouped under the category labels are indicated in bold italic type. Properties and dimensions to categories and sub categories are grouped under the bullet and dash labels.

Reference numbers (for example - **D4** and **D2AAA**) and field codes (for example - (BF/W/12) [BF 5]) are included with the data. This coding system enabled cross-reference of coded data to the original transcriptions.

CATEGORY - PURPOSE/ROLE

THEME - GENERAL

"

D4: Knowing our purpose/ the track we're taking/ this is what we are here for/ knowing that you are there to provide this quality service/ complying with what the organisation requires you to do/ achieving what the agency has set as it goals/ looking at the objective of the agency/ look our customers comes first, that's what we're here to service/ the way we've got to go/ the reason for the museum is to provide a service to the public/ the reason why we are here/ what do we focus on as our core business/ proper interpretation/ making up the goal of what we can achieve/ working on the goal of what we can achieve/ knowing what direction we should be heading in for improving the park

(BF/W/12) [BF 5] I guess the word 'focus' is the key word - what do we focus on as our core business

(MU/W/156) [MU 5] Well the reason that the museum is here is to provide that service to the public.

(KP/W/95) [KP 8] that's why we are here.

(BF/W/165) [BF 9] But that's the way we've got to go.

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] and we should say "look our customers come first, that's what we're here to service", or that's the way I see it.

(BF/W/7) [BF 2] So its about being able to look at what is the objective of the agency and, or purpose

(FT/W/95) [FT/7] On a personal - myself - its, you know that you are there to provide this quality service

(FT/W/95) [FT/7] you know that not only are you complying with what the organisation requires you to do

(FT/W/176) [FT/1] And ultimately achieving what the agency has set as its goals as far as strategic plans and things like that go.

(SA/W/145) [SA 4] So the track we're tacking.

(AG/W/70) [AG 7] I mean that's why we are here, partly why we are here.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] - a lot of what happens in the Park has to do with proper interpretation.

(KP/W/88) [KP 7] and in that way then we can make up, lets say a goal, what we can achieve.

(KP/W/88) [KP 7] you know and work on that [the goal of what we can achieve].

(KP/W/102) [KP 9] then we know what direction we should be heading in for improving the park.

- pos., practice, that's what we do to a large extent

(MU/W/156) [MU 5] then yes that's what it does, to a large extent.

- *the focus is [there is only one focus] in getting customers in here/ getting people through the door/ our success is measured by people coming through the doors/ ad hoc sort of requirement/ someone else further up wants to know something, you know "how many people did you put through, how many of this, how many of that/ need to justify what the agency is doing for the money, funding they are receiving/ its the measurable results*

(AG/W/217) [AG 5] because its the measurable results ...

(AG/W/225) [AG 5] Because people through the door is a measurement of ours

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] So someone else further up wants to know something, you know "how many people did you put through, how many of this, how many of that".

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] which is, in my eyes, an ad hoc sort of requirement

(AG/W/19) [AG 6] getting customers in here and

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] So therefore the focus must be on getting people in.

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] So I would say the focus is wholly upon getting people through the door

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] I would say there is only the one focus – people through the door.

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] And our success is based on how many people come and look at the Gallery.

(MU/W/126) [MU 8] but I've certainly seen - working in government departments like this - that it is also very much looking at getting numbers in.

(MU/W/128) [MU 8] Well because, getting numbers in -

(MU/W/128) [MU 8] they need to justify what the institution is doing; the money that they are receiving and the funding and everything.

- which is obviously an important factor/ so it can become quite a big issue

(MU/W/126) [MU 8] which is obviously an important factor.

(MU/W/128) [MU 8] So that can become quite a big issue.

- having marketing teams, education teams addressing getting people coming through the door

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] We have a marketing team addressing that.

(AG/W/235) [AG 9] we have education teams addressing that

- *top statement/ there is that direction there/ mission statement/ operating under the customer focus guideline (relates to the requirement of the strategic plan which requires, forces you to be customer focused in factors which force us to be customer focused in G16B)/ all linked to the customer focus charter you've got to have a goal, that's the only way*

(KP/W/191) [KP 7] and your gonna have - you gonna have a goal. that's the only way.
(FT/W/95) [FT/7] so by having, by more or less operating under the customer focus guidelines,
(FT/W/97) [FT/7] Yes, pursuant to the charter.
(FT/W/176) [FT/1] and that's all linked into the customer focus charter and all that sort of stuff.
(AG/W/159) [AG 2] and from that top statement, that is what we are working to,
(AG/W/159) [AG 2] there is a direction there.
(AG/W/159) [AG 2] I mean there is a mission statement that the Gallery has,
(AG/W/205) [AG 3] and therefore it has that. I mean our mission is, isn't it.

- directed to the people of WA/ directed to the community/ its about providing a service/ we're a state institution/ the gallery belongs to the people of WA

(AG/W/159) [AG 2] its very directed to the people of Western Australia.
(AG/W/159) [AG 2] it is very directed to the community.
(AG/W/159) [AG 2] it is about providing service
(AG/W/205) [AG 3] because it is a State institution,
(AG/W/205) [AG 3] it belongs to people of the State

- bring to the attention of the people of WA and visitors what we have here
[note: same thing as informing customers what we do in CIA yet this time is expressed as the groups mission]

(AG/W/205) [AG 3] to bring to the attention of the people of Western Australia and anybody who happens to visit Western Australia, what we have got here.

- *the requirement of the strategic plan which requires, forces you to be customer focused*

(FT/W/93) [FT/7] Other than the, not statutory requirement but the requirement to provide that, that level of service or that focus I mean, with the strategic plan and all that sort of thing.
(FT/W/95) [FT/7] So it provides, the better aspect of having customer focuses is knowing that you are providing what you are suppose to be providing.

- reigns you in to providing that level of service/ strategic plan gives you the requirement to be customer focused/ urges you to provide that level of service

(FT/W/93) [FT/7] you've got the requirement to be customer focus.
(FT/W/93) [FT/7] so, a good aspect of that is that, if anything, it reigns you in to provide
(FT/W/93) [FT/7] - more or less urge you to provide that level of focus or that level of service so that you have got that.

- *if we didn't have customers we wouldn't exist, we would be dead/ wouldn't be surviving if we weren't providing an effective service (relates to survival in TMT in F2 and surviving in D2 - knowing what to do). we have to be customer focused/ if we are going to survive in the whurly burly reshuffles of government/ that's what we're all about/ if we didn't have the public we wouldn't be able to continue/ if the agency's not customer focused, what's a person going to do/ its here for the public who are our customers/ we wouldn't have a job if we didn't have customers/ If you don't have customer focus then what do you have/ if we don't have a client we don't have much to do*

(BF/W/68) [BF 3] so if we don't have them [customers are our clients], we don't have a lot do we.

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] Well without customers we wouldn't be here for a start
 (KP/W/191) [KP 7] If you don't have it then what do you have basically.
 (KP/W/144) [KP 1] Particularly Kings Park because we are a service - I mean we wouldn't have a job if we didn't have customers.
 (KP/W/41) [KP 8] Well its got to - what does it do - its here for the public who are our customers.
 (MU/W/123) [MU 2] because if its [the agency] not [customer focused] then what's a person going to do.
 (MU/W/60) [MU 1] That's what we're here. are all about.
 (MU/W/60) [MU 1] Because if we didn't have the public we wouldn't really be able to sort of continue with what we doing.
 (BF/W/153) [BF 4] If we didn't have our volunteers, we wouldn't have a Bushfires Board.
 (BF/W/17) [BF 6] Well without customers we wouldn't be here for a start
 (FT/W/75) [FT/5] And I also think that it's good for the Ministry if it's going to survive in the whurly, burly reshuffles of Government organisations.
 (SA/W/13) [SA 4] I mean without our clients we wouldn't exist.
 (SA/W/180) [SA 9] I guess ultimately the agency wouldn't survive if they weren't providing an effective service.
 (SA/W/185) [SA 3] it has to be.
 (SA/W/185) [SA 3] so yeah you've got to be.
 (SA/W/185) [SA 3] If HR is not customer focused it would be dead
 (SA/W/187) [SA 3] But we have got to do it.
 (SA/W/187) [SA 3] We're their HR area, we've got to do it.
 (AG/W/204) [AG 2] I mean without people coming through the doors we would be a very dead institution

- neg., practice, most people aren't with the public/

(MU/W/60) [MU 1] I get the feeling that its sort of a - most people aren't with the public.

- you can't avoid being customer focused

(SA/W/187) [SA 3] you can't avoid it.

- need to show we are providing good services (Note that this is a self focus)

(FT/W/75) [FT/5] that we need to be able to show that we are providing quality service
 (FT/W/75) [FT/5] and that there is a need for that [ability to show that we provide quality services].

• *having a set of criteria*

(KP/W/102) [KP 9] If we, well I suppose if - we have a set of criteria

D2A (1): knowing the job/ knowing what to do and how we are going to do it/ not here to generate work, we run an art gallery/ we run an art museum not an art gallery/ knowing what the customer is talking about/ understanding what we do/ our role, we need to achieve our role/ knowing what our core business is and knowing what to do/ focusing on our core business/ that's our work where we are - meaning meeting the people, working with them and trying to please them/ knowing your position/ knowing what your, your office, your department is meant to be doing for the public/ your job is to try and keep the best aspects of the park for our customers/ how we go about running the park/ knowing how to service customer needs/ knowing do we continue something, do we improve something or do we stop something

(SA/W/32) [SA 7] Basically it just more, how to service there needs in.
 (SA/W/32) [SA 7] Basically it just more, how to service there needs in.
 (KP/W/44) [KP 9] So how we go about running the park
 (KP/W/82) [KP 7] I mean your job is to try and keep the best aspects of the park for our customers.
 (MU/W/27) [MU 8] and what the Department or office or whatever it is that you are in, operates as far as what they're there to do for the public.
 (MU/W/27) [MU 8] Well I think a good part is first of all, knowing your position -
 (MU/W/27) [MU 8] what you're meant to do
 (MU/W/17) [MU 6] I suppose that's our work where we are
 (BF/W/35) [BF 2] Well, because the agency's got a role
 (BF/W/35) [BF 2] and we need to achieve that role
 (BF/W/12) [BF 5] and what are we going to do,
 (BF/W/12) [BF 5] how are we going to do it
 (BF/W/14) [BF 5] Customer focus - what's the board all about,
 (BF/W/12) [BF 5] what is our core business and what do we -
 (FT/W/251) [FT/7] Probably with the role that this organisation has.
 (SA/W/69) [SA 6] Is knowing the job.
 (AG/W/12) [AG 5] We're not here just to sort of self generate work, we run an art gallery.
 (AG/W/29) [AG 10] We are initially a museum in my mind rather than an art gallery.
 (AG/W/29) [AG 10] We display areas of history through the art medium.
 (AG/W/75) [AG 8] you know I know what they are talking about.
 (AG/W/230) [AG 6] They are doing their job
 (BF/W/35) [BF 2] then we know that "do we continue something". "do we improve something". "do we stop something".

- its not the best art but it is what has happened

(AG/W/29) [AG 10] it is not the best of art but what has happened.
 (AG/W/29) [AG 10] and how it has transgressed through to the present day.

- keeping records up to date/ analysing leave records/ amending calculations/
 consulting with customers/ going back to customers is they don't agree

(FT/W/43) [FT/9] and we always have to keep our records up-to-date.
 (FT/W/43) [FT/9] If they're not up-to-date.
 (FT/W/43) [FT/9] we have to actually analyse their Leave Records.
 (FT/W/43) [FT/9] to amend calculation on our Annual Leave, Sick Leave and Long Service Leave
 (FT/W/43) [FT/9] and then get back to say this is what we've got, do you agree?
 (FT/W/43) [FT/9] If they don't agree, then we have to go back.

- *you've got to prioritise/ the agency prioritises on what gets done first/ you forever setting priorities*

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] You're forever setting priorities within the agency
 (KP/W/109) [KP 2] So you obviously got to prioritise
 (KP/W/109) [KP 2] Well once again the agency prioritises on what gets done first.

- *knowing our role and the deadlines we have to meet/ working routines and deadlines/ how we're going to meeting the deadlines/ knowing where to get the information from/ knowing who I can pass the customer onto*

(AG/W/55) [AG 4] if other people are able to get the information they need to do the job that, you know they need to do.

(AG/W/75) [AG 8] if it is not inside my head, then able to know where I can get it from quickly
(AG/W/75) [AG 8] and who I can pass them on to
(BF/W/8) [BF 3] and how we're going to complete them, on time
(SA/W/141) [SA 2] because we are mature enough to know the role and deadlines that we have got to basically come up with
(SA/W/141) [SA 2] our own working routine, our own deadlines.

- increases productivity

(AG/W/55) [AG 4] and I guess increases productivity

- *pos., practice, we're getting much more written material handed out/ we are fed information*

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] And so from that point of view we're getting all different - much more written material handed out.

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] We've taken on board, we are fed information.

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] we're given handouts and generally I think its improved out of site.

- *pos., practice, I try to have a broad range view of everything/ what sort of plants are here/ what sort of building structures are here.*

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] I try to get a broad land view of everything.

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] I try to have a broad range

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] especially from what sort of plants there is

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] to what sort of building structures there are in the Park.

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] but I try to do it.

- practice, which is pretty hard to do/ there's so much going on here

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] because there's so much going on here.

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] which is pretty hard to do

(KP/W/70) [KP 5] which is quite hard to do.

CATEGORY - PURPOSE/ROLE

THEME - BALANCING

A0 (2): trying to get the two things working together / being the meat in the sandwich/ getting caught between the two/ in line with what we can deal with and what their role is/ only going so far/ can't give customers things that they are not entitled to/ not compromising my relationship with others/ getting a compromise between the two/ providing a service within the parameters set down by the law/ what we perceive the public expects of us and what we actually offer to the public/ customers have certain perceptions up and we have certain perceptions up/ trying to make the two gel/having two things to do

(AG/W/160) [AG 3] See it is difficult in the Gallery because you have got two things;

(AG/W/160) [AG 3] So the two things working, trying to work together

(SA/W/87) [SA 2] Quite often you then become the meat in the sandwich I suppose

(SA/W/91) [SA 2] The meat in the sandwich.

(SA/W/91) [SA 2] and so you get caught between the two.

(MU/W/4) [MU 1] and its kind of trying to make the two gel

(MU/W/4) [MU 1] They [customers] have certain perceptions up and we have certain perceptions up

(MU/W/2) [MU 1] Well is what we perceive the public expects of us and what we actually offer to the public

(FT/W/110) [FT/8] which is providing a service within the parameters set down by the law that you have to administer.

(FT/W/7) [FT/2] by we're the ministry of fair trading so we can only go to a particular point.

(FT/W/7) [FT/2] We can't give them something. I can't give them something that I don't believe their entitled to

(FT/W/7) [FT/2] I won't compromise my relationship with traders.

(FT/W/7) [FT/2] pushing them to give things that I don't believe that their. not obliged to give.

(FT/W/35) [FT/7] So its a matter of, in line with what the Ministry can deal with and what their role is.

(FT/W/57) [FT/2] Oh Gosh. Getting some sort of compromise between the two.

- wanting to provide a better service (what your trying to do) and doing the best for your customer (and what you actually do)

(SA/W/91) [SA 2] basically that's the thing that I get the impressions sometimes that clients, you want to provide a better service for them and your doing your best

- sometimes problematic/ not letting some things happen/ sometimes that is problematic/ its difficult

(AG/W/160) [AG 3] and therefore, if that might be the best way to appreciated the collection we've got.

(AG/W/160) [AG 3] at the same time you can't let that happen

(AG/W/160) [AG 3] and sometimes that is problematic(AG/W/162) [AG 3] So that is a problem as well.

(AG/W/162) [AG 3] Difficult.

- *compromise between what the customer wants and the services we are actually providing*

(SA/W/33) [SA 8] Customer Focus is the service that the customers requires and the services we're actually giving.

(SA/W/33) [SA 8] Instead of saying yes we want this and we're saying yes we can provide it, but it is a compromise between what they want and how we can provide it.

- *you've got to try to do your best/ doing your best is one way of getting results/ you can only do so much/*

(KP/W/77) [KP 6] And to me, is - you've got to try to do your best

(KP/W/77) [KP 6] because if you do your best, that's one way you can get results.

(KP/W/79) [KP 6] because you can only do so much in here in Kings Park.

- you can't say like your trying to help other people

(KP/W/79) [KP 6] Well, you can't say like you trying to help other people

D2A-1: having to say 'no' sometimes/ tying you down to what your supposed to do/ you can't offer something across the board for everyone/ you can't please everybody/ you'll always get a few that say 'no we don't like that'

(MU/W/147) [MU 4] Well we are in a situation where we have to take it for grips.

(MU/W/145) [MU 4] We can't offer across the board something for everyone all the time.

(BF/W/76) [BF 5] Oh, well, is perhaps that I guess if it is a worst aspect, that it does tie you down to what you're supposed to do.

(BF/W/80) [BF 5] that you are tied down and sometimes, I find it hard to say no sometimes.

(KP/W/130) [KP 7] you can't please everyone.

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] their daily requirements

(KP/W/130) [KP 7] so just in then sense can't please everyone, I suppose.

(KP/W/130) [KP 7] but what we're doing, you'll always get a few that will say, 'no we don't like that'.

- neg., practice, is a worst aspect

(KP/W/130) [KP 7] I guess, well the worst aspects is

- *probably not a bad thing/ you can look at that as a positive of negative thing/ I look at it as a bad thing*

(BF/W/76) [BF 5] And that's probably not a bad thing anyway.

(BF/W/78) [BF 5] It doesn't give you any lee-way to get side-tracked perhaps if you want to.

(BF/W/78) [BF 5] But I guess if you think of it - but I guess you can look at that in negative or positive terms.

(BF/W/78) [BF 5] Perhaps I look at it perhaps sometimes as a negative thing

CATEGORY - PURPOSE/ROLE

THEME - TALKED ABOUT

D2AA: customer focus is talked about/ knowing what is expected of you/ that's their (TMT) articulated intention/ that's part of the emphasis/ management have meetings and meetings and meeting and talk about these things/ putting out reams and reams of paper and nice charters/ its something you hear on a daily basis/ your hear it with all things that you do/ its very much around the place/ its something that is talked about at an annual conference/ its just where the priority of bosses is/ its just when something occurs that might involve the TMT/ the very nature of our agency suggests its important/ management come out with all these things and say we will do this/ formalised - customer focus has been put into writing/ its just policy that's been approved by the board/

(BF/W/124) [BF 8] There seems to be an awful lot of meetings going on.

(BF/W/124) [BF 8] there seems to be quite a lot of talk about it

(FT/W/232) [FT/3] and you know management at the top can come out with all these things and say.

(FT/W/232) [FT/3] "OK we'll implement this and we'll implement that".

(BF/W/98) [BF 2] The very nature of our agency would suggest that its very, very important

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] But its the sort of thing that we would talk about it most when we have an annual staff conference.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] Its something that we talked about either directly or indirectly.

(FT/W/189) [FT/4] The TMT to me seems to, they have meetings and meetings and meeting to talk about all these things.

(FT/W/189) [FT/4] They put out reams and reams of paper and nice charters and all nice things
(FT/W/204) [FT/7] So it's very much around the place.

(FT/W/202) [FT/7] I think that's very relevant, its something which you hear on a daily basis, in every event.

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] It's just when something occurs that might involve them (TMT)

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] And another thing I just thought of, that's the way they're, the priority of bosses is.

(BF/W/133) [BF 1] In writing.

(BF/W/135) [BF 1] Yes, that's all it [customer focus has been formalised] is to me.

(BF/W/135) [BF 1] is that customer focus is just policy that's been approved by the Board, and its policy.

(BF/W/137) [BF 1] To me, that's really what it [putting what we're doing into words] is.

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] Its (customer focus) talked about

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] Well it is,

(SA/W/146) [SA 5] I know what they expect of us as the branch

(AG/W/217) [AG 5] I would say that that's their articulated intention

(SA/W/172) [SA 8] I'd hate to think that my management is saying well just do that, just do that without a reason.

- *pos., practice, we're finding out more what's happening in the park*

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] We're finding out far more what's happening in the Parks.

- *practice, there was initial excitement and enthusiasm when customer focus got on the board*

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] There was initial enthusiasm when we got our corporate planning on the board, which is, I think incorporates customer focus.

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] You know there was an initial excitement and enthusiasm

- *neg., practice, It may be just a matter of talking: I often hear the TMT sometimes say things like "well we've got to support the customers' TMT may say, "the customers wont like that, we better ask them", "perhaps we should ask them"*

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] but although I often hear the boss and other senior people - they sometimes they say things like "Well we've got to support our customers"

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] but it may only be just a matter of talking.

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] They may be saying something - do you know what I mean or "The customers won't like that, we'd better ask them what they think of doing something"

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] and I think the idea is that we should ask the customer.

(BF/W/94) [BF 1] if we want them to do something, perhaps we should ask them what they think.

- *you hear its always providing the best/ recognising customer needs/ providing a lot of assistance/ this is the best way to deal with this, to provide this service/ to provide a better, efficient and consistent service*

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] this is the best way to deal with this to provide this service.

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] You hear, you know, whether its just dealing with a file or you know

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] so it's always providing the best

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] or recognising customer needs

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] and being able to provide, maybe a lot of assistance that day they might have.

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] to provide a better, efficient and consistent advice or better service.

- *meetings you have in regards to better ways of dealing with people/ training for better services*

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] so its a very strong - I mean team meetings you have in regards to better ways of dealing with people.

(FT/W/204) [FT/7] training for the telephone advice line.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] what we are all about, where we were going, what we could do with our resources.

- *seen it written down on pieces of paper/ customer focus has been in circulars/ briefly what I've read*

(KP/W/12) [KP 2] but just briefly from what I have read

(SA/W/192) [SA 4] I've seen it written down on pieces of paper..

(SA/W/192) [SA 4] I mean our circulars, from computer tech ran something on customer focus.

(SA/W/192) [SA 4] managers on customer focus. you get to see a lot of things down at records.

- *we have charter/ having a charter and told to hand it out/ customer focus is not 'pushed' around this organisation/ your not told how to follow the charter or what's expected of it[relates to D2GA]/ staff were made aware of the formal customer focus charter*

(SA/W/58) [SA 5] Yes we do.

(SA/W/60) [SA 5] We've seen it.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] and I think all staff were made aware of our formal customer focus charter.

(SA/W/60) [SA 5] More or less when we were given it, its just more or less told to hand it out to other people

(SA/W/199) [SA 5] I don't think its more or less pushed around here that there is a customer charter and you are suppose to follow it and what's expected of it.

- *all very well saying these things/ sound like clichés*

(SA/W/63) [SA 6] But the point is, its all very well saying these things.

(SA/W/63) [SA 6] they can sound like clichés

THEME - PURPOSE/ROLE

THEME - NOT SHARED

D2A (2): Focused on what they are doing/ not looking at the overall picture/ seeing yourself just as security/ just looking after artwork/ just their key focus

(AG/W/228) [AG 6] but I think that some people are really focused on what they are doing

(AG/W/228) [AG 6] and looking after the artwork

(AG/W/228) [AG 6] and that is their key focus.

(AG/W/228) [AG 6] that is their focus is

- dealing with specific industries

(FT/W/251) [FT/7] It's an organisation which I think -because we're dealing with specific industries

- this is my job to change the blinds/ this is my job to tell people not to go over that line/ telling people to get back

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] and this is my job to change the blinds

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] and this is when I am doing it

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] or this is my job to tell people not to go over that line

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] and they are not supposed to go over that line

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] so I am going to tell them to get back.

D2AAA: customer focus is not something you think about everyday, its just that you do it/ its just your personal customer focus that you do (in other words, a going it alone strategy)/ but its HOW the workers work on the service level agreements/ customer focus is informally of course/ not seen anything in print/ not their (TMT) ideals its actually the workers/ its the workers dedication to customer focus make it happen not whether or not the higher people actually ask for it/ its the team that actually does it/ everybody's got their own ideas

(BF/W/96) [BF 1] but its probably not a thing, to them or me personally, think about every day, its just that you do it.

(KP/W/130) [KP 7] everyone's going to have their own ideas

(MU/W/39) [MU 3] Not necessarily their ideals and their - you know their the workers, that the higher people work with - but I think its actually the people.

(MU/W/39) [MU 3] Its - their dedication to Customer Focus and it will happen whether or not the higher people actually ask whether or not.

(MU/W/39) [MU 3] I think its the team that actually does it.

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] Its just your personal customer focus that you do it.

(SA/W/164) [SA 7] But it is how the workers work on the service level agreements.

(AG/W/133) [AG 9] It is informally of course

(AG/W/131) [AG 9] Once again I have not seen anything in print coming from the Gallery.

- just my observations/ little things like that/ talking to people

(KP/W/14) [KP 2] Well basically from my observation.

(KP/W/14) [KP 2] And just little things like that.

(KP/W/14) [KP 2] and talking to people

(KP/W/95) [KP 8] talking to people.

(KP/W/172) [KP 9] Like we talk to the public on the ground

- *knowing the charter is more or less expected of everyone*

(SA/W/60) [SA 5] but you know its more or less expected of everyone, we know that

- *looking at things on assumption*

(SA/W/77) [SA 8] I look at, probably a lot on assumption.

*D2AAAA: only knowing one side of it/ can only relate it to my manager, director/
can't speak what's going on in the other divisions/ I can only relate it where I
sit/ don't know/ inadequate training/ don't realise they are offending the
customer or not providing a good service/ maybe they don't think about it/
maybe they just don't know*

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] I don't know, it is hard.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] I don't know.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] Maybe not adequate training.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] They don't probably actually know that they are offending a customer

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] or that they are not providing good service.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] maybe they don't actually think about it.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] Maybe they just don't know.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] maybe they don't.

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] Well I mean I've been trained in, well I did a marketing degree so I know a bit
about customer service

(AG/W/230) [AG 6] so I can see it but

(FT/W/174) [FT/1] Well I can only relate it to say my direct line manager.

(FT/W/174) [FT/1] Well I go from my manager to my director.

(FT/W/174) [FT/1] Now I can't speak of, what other agencies cause this agency is structured within
division that are industry based,

(FT/W/174) [FT/1] so what the real estate industry is doing or what the housing industry division,
etc. and so on, I can't talk to you about because I don't know necessarily.

(FT/W/174) [FT/1] From where I sit within the division that I sit, then I will speak to you along
those lines and that's really where I can relate my answer to.

(SA/W/151) [SA 6] Its difficult for me to be explicit because I only know one side of it

(SA/W/151) [SA 6] So I can only make my judgment on my own experience.

- *I'm not convinced I have the complete picture*

(SA/W/217) [SA 8] and I'm not totally convinced that I have that full picture.

- *my interpretation of customer focus is probably different to others*

(SA/W/217) [SA 8] My interpretation of customer focus is probably different to other people.

*D2GD-1: TMT assume workers and TMT views on customer focus are align/ one
of the best kept secrets /*

(FT/W/189) [FT/4] And some of the ideas they come up with are not practical to be able to put out
into the market place.

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] and there's a lot of great ideas

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] so naturally they (TMT) assume - be aligned hopefully.

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] Well in actually - everybody has a certain amount of fundamental thoughts
and ways they (TMT) want to go.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] - Mr X over in science, I don't see enough of him.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] but that's a classic kind of best kept secrets up here.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] But that's if it surfaces

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] we don't have a meeting that often.

- *they do an incredible job/ that guy is a mover and shaker/ when I do have
access to this man its absolutely brilliant*

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] Their do an incredible job.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] That guys is a mover and shaker.

(KP/W/155) [KP 4] But when I do have access to this man its absolutely brilliant.

- *practice, hopefully that sort of comes out in the way workers see what the TMT should do*

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] And hopefully that's sort of comes out the way we see that they (TMT) should do.

- sometimes it doesn't/ nobodies all right

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] Sometimes it doesn't.

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] You know, nobodies all right.

D2GD: Everybody's doing their own thing/ everybody's so/ not everybody going along the same lines/ not doing the same things/ not all on the same wave length/ people here tend to go their own way

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] Worst aspects of customer focus are for me that not every body seems to be along the same lines here.

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] And I think its hard when everybody is not doing the same thing.

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] your not all on the same wave length.

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] But it tends to be here. I think a lot of people just, people just go their own way

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] I think, do their own thing.

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] because everyone so individual.

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] so every section their own sort of, they have got their own sort of, their own ways of doing things

- that makes it difficult

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] And I think that is difficult.

- *what the TMT and we (workers) consider as customer focus maybe different things*

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] and what they (TMT) consider to be customer focus, and what we (workers) may think customer focus may not be what they consider

- *what the TMT and we (workers) consider as customers maybe different things*

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] or the same clients.

- TMT may only consider externals clients, not the people they deal with everyday

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] like they might consider their clients only as outside of the public service and not the people they deal with everyday from another Branch or another agency.

D2H: people (staff) tend to ignore customer focus/ we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it off/ customer focus doesn't mean much/ most people have forgotten about customer focus

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] and most people have just forgotten about it.
(AG/W/39) [AG 10] We have a Customer Focus charter, yes. I couldn't sprout it off
(SA/W/86) [SA 1] but I me people tend to ignore it (customer focus)
(AG/W/41) [AG 10] Well it doesn't.
(AG/W/41) [AG 10] In the initial it really doesn't mean much.

G22 - providing good customer service but thinking that's not right

(FT/W/179) [FT/2] I mean that's good customer focus
(FT/W/181) [FT/2] That's good customer focus
(FT/W/179) [FT/2] and I don't necessarily think that's right if we truly are fair trading.
(FT/W/183) [FT/2] No. I mean it is for that person but in an overall way, no I don't believe it is good customer service
(FT/W/183) [FT/2] So I don't think that particularly is.

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - NON COMMITMENT

D2AA-1: what's talked about is not what happens/ having all the charters you like but that doesn't mean that's what's happening/ there is a gap between the way we work and the way we are perceived (maybe could put in knowing what to do in D2A)/ we are failing in meeting our charter in a big way/ should be reaching a broader spectrum [of clients] than what we are doing/ no other deliberate action to align our thoughts to the customer has occurred/ meeting our rhetoric hasn't necessarily occurred/ there is a difference between the TMT plan and what is actually put into place/ love to see things happen but they don't/ not achieving the goals you originally set out to do/ what the TMT are saying is one thing/ we claim to be customer focused but I have my doubts/ what the customer's needs are and what is actually going to be given is sometimes in conflict/ we're failing in a big way/ everyone knows we have a customer focus charter but it is not utilised/ its not an everyday thing/ we produce some rhetoric that said we were customer focused/ the pamphlet but that's all it does/big on rhetoric but poor on performance

(BF/W/161) [BF 7] We produce some rhetoric that said we were customer focused -
(BF/W/161) [BF 7] pamphlet but that's all it does.
(FT/W/68) [FT/4] and which I feel that we're failing in a big way.
(FT/W/68) [FT/4] but I think that's been a big area that we're failing.
(FT/W/66) [FT/4] (pause) That's a good question. Its something that, to me customer focus is being able to deal with issues that reach a broader spectrum than what we are already doing.
(FT/W/215) [FT/10] Well, everyone knows we have a customer focus service charter implemented but it's not utilised as far as I'm concerned.
(BF/W/94) [BF 1] but its not an every day thing.
(FT/W/35) [FT/7] I mean what the customer's needs are and what is actually going to be given at the end of the day is sometimes in conflict
(KP/W/192) [KP 8] Well we claim to be, whether they are or not though.
(KP/W/147) [KP 2] because what they are saying is one thing.
(KP/W/133) [KP 8] your not, your not achieving any goals of what you originally set out to do.
(MU/W/115) [MU 5] Maybe there is a sort of difference of - what they plan and what is actually put into place.
(KP/W/109) [KP 2] and you'd love to see these things happen just like that but they don't.

(BF/W/161) [BF 7] But meeting our rhetoric hasn't necessarily occurred I don't think.
(BF/W/161) [BF 7] No other deliberate action to align our thoughts to the customers has occurred apart from things that might spin off the strategic plan in better allocation of resources.
(SA/W/122) [SA 9] I guess the only one I could say further to that is it gets back to the talk and whether that's exactly what's happened because quite often that's not the case.
(SA/W/124) [SA 9] You can have all the customer service charters and things like that in place
(SA/W/124) [SA 9] but that doesn't necessarily mean that's what happening
(SA/W/157) [SA 6] I think there is a gap between the way we work and the way we are perceived.
(AG/W/41) [AG 10] That is not happening in the big picture.
(FT/W/187) [FT/4] Big on rhetoric but very poor on actual performance.

- I feel that I'm saying things that might appear critical

(SA/W/157) [SA 6] I feel that I'm going saying things that might appear to be critical (nervousness sounding in voice).

- neg., practice, it doesn't get done/ your not delivering

(KP/W/131) [KP 8] Probably that it doesn't get done.

(KP/W/133) [KP 8] and if your not delivering

- neg., practice, well I don't know, it could be

(KP/W/135) [KP 8] Well I don't know, it could be.

• *neg., practice, management doesn't keep their promises that they are saying to the people [workers] / management keep promising, promising*

(KP/W/129) [KP 6] Management doesn't keep their promises that they are trying to say to the people.

(KP/W/129) [KP 6] To me, they keep promising, promising.

- that's the worst thing

(KP/W/127) [KP 6] The worst thing is that the

- neg., practice, example of management not keeping their promises with reclassification of jobs and they still don't do it/ we've done reclassification once before

(KP/W/129) [KP 6] And now with this new Management they've told us that they are going to do a new reclassification and they still doesn't do it.

(KP/W/129) [KP 6] First, is when it comes to classification of jobs, the Management say they're going to classify everybody again because they are being under - we've done reclassification once before

• *neg., practice, you still hear lots of workers saying 'we're asking for training and we're not getting it.*

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] But you still hear a lot of other workers saying 'we keep asking for training and we're not getting it'

- *Its depends on the sponsorship/ government allocation/ you go budgeting*

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] Its depends, its depending on the sponsorship.

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] Government allocation.

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] you go budgeting and this sort of thing.

- *neg., past practice, because for years and years they (TMT) were promising and nothing was happening/ TMT promised more training which was a bone of contention*

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] They promised us more training which was a bone of contention

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] because for years and years they were promising. nothing was happening.

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] So from a personal point of view. I would have to say yes its working out in that regard.

D2AA-2: neg., practice, sometimes its pretty impossible to actually take up with what we've said we're going to do/ taking things too far/ its just unreasonable/ it doesn't always work/ we're going out and doing things but we don't have the resources to do them properly/ telling customers we going to do this and that but we can't because we don't have the people

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] What we're doing now is we're possibly going out

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] but we don't have the resources to do them properly.

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] we tell them that we're going to do this and we're going to do that.

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] and when it comes to actually putting it on the ground.

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] we can't do it because we don't have the people.

(BF/W/64) [BF 3] Sometimes it pretty impossible to actually to actually take up with what we've said we're going to do.

(BF/W/63) [BF 2] So those kinds of things whereby its taken too far

(BF/W/61) [BF 2] it could be taken too far

(BF/W/63) [BF 2] because its just unreasonable I think.

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] So I mean it may not always work.

- *having an information centre that doesn't give out any information/ nothing to tell you that there is a botanic garden around the corner*

(KP/W/113) [KP 4] We have an Information Centre out there that doesn't give any information about the Park.

(KP/W/115) [KP 4] there's nothing in there to tell you that there is a Botanic Gardens around the corner.

- *neg., practice, there's nothing*

(KP/W/115) [KP 4] there's nothing.

- *neg., practice, giving commitment that the agency can't perform/ we're failing to perform properly/ creating expectations that we can't fill*

(BF/W/86) [BF 9] I think failing to do that. failing to perform properly. failing

(BF/W/86) [BF 9] - you know people giving commitments that the agency can't perform to

(BF/W/86) [BF 9] and then creating expectations that you can't fill.

- *it can take a while to get the information together*

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] So with information like that, it can take quite a while to actually get this information together.

- that's a worst aspect to customer focus

(BF/W/63) [BF 2] So I find that probably one of the worst aspects.

- example, responding to a letter in 10 days where I had to send the original letter on to two different people

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] Well just take for example the letters again.

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] I mean if somebody sent me a letter asking how many nights accommodation do our employees spend in motels across the State -

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] that's not, its not, I mean I don't do that sort of thing.

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] so if its sent to me I hand it on to somebody else

(BF/W/66) [BF 3] and that person might not do it but they hand it on to somebody else.

D2A-3: we're suppose to know everything but we don't

(FT/W/166) [FT/9] we're suppose to know everything but we don't know everything.

D2AA-4: the fit between what we do and what customers expect is so wide it just falls through/ customers aren't getting what they want/ not supplying what we should/ inward thinking/ things not being what customers expect/ what we provide is different from what customers were thinking

(AG/W/94) [AG 93] You know, kind of, I guess an inward looking thing.

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] so they are not happy, things like that.

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] The reality not being what they expect.

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] [pause] Some people, it is not what they expect.

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] maybe people may be turned off.

(MU/W/78) [MU 5] Say its focus - the sort of the fit between what is that we do and what it is, is what it is expected is so wide that it just falls through.

(MU/W/69) [MU 2] or that its different from what they were thinking.

- neg., practice, we're not providing service I guess/ its not there

(MU/W/76) [MU 5] Not providing that service, I guess.

(MU/W/69) [MU 2] That its not there

- neg., practice, this goes on heaps in this organisation/not good customer focus

(FT/W/163) Yes it goes on heaps.

(FT/W/229) [FT/2] I don't particularly think that's good customer focus.

(MU/W/86) [MU 7] The public aren't getting what they want.

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] That we are just not supplying what we should.

- *as a consequence of that (TMT just don't have time to work things out/ TMT are very hard workers in F-4) people don't get their queries answered/ the little*

people enquiries don't get answered/ the little things are a bit difficult to get customer focus through

(MU/W/142) [MU 3] And so as a consequence of that, people don't get their queries answered to (MU/W/142) [MU 3] but the little people enquiries don't get answered to (MU/W/142) [MU 3] but its just the little things that are a bit difficult just to get customer focus through.

- *neg., practice, TMT have allowed answering machines which is just crazy/ people can't get through to officers because of these machines*

(FT/W/229) [FT/2] but then they allow answering machines left, right and centre which is just crazy. I mean to me that isn't customer focused.

(FT/W/229) [FT/2] Management have allowed answering machines in.

(FT/W/229) [FT/2] people just can't get through to officers sometimes because of these answering machines.

D2E3: problems that were going to be addressed by the TMT/ problems the TMT have not addressed/ one of those things that was going to be addressed/ suppose to be addressed/ what are we going to do with that situation/ IF the problems were addressed everything else would fall into place/ but its not addressed/ it would work [if things were addressed]/ TMT sometimes don't take any notice/ things holding the TMT back/ it could be better/ it could be a world renown museum if they wanted to/ TMT rely too much on economic rationalism and not enough on actual customer focus

(MU/W/107) [MU 4] - its sometimes that they (TMT) don't take any notice but I think that they

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] and these are problems that as I have said before, they haven't been addressed.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] And that would be, it would work very well, with what is happening.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] But its not addressed.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] and this was - and we maintain down at our level, that's the clerical staff.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] that its within this organisation that those issues were addressed everything else would fall into place.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] That was one thing that was actually going to be addressed.

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] it was suppose to be addressed

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] and perhaps they decided 'as far as I am concerned what are we doing to do with the situation'.

(MU/W/106) [MU 3] but there are things still holding them back.

(MU/W/103) [MU 3] but at the same time there are things that are holding it back.

(MU/W/103) [MU 3] It could be much better.

(MU/W/103) [MU 3] it could be like a world renowned museum if they really wanted it to be

(MU/W/103) [MU 3] and I think there's a little bit too much thought on - what's the phrase that they use where monetary terms come before, sort of economic things come before customer focus and things like that. Its very much -Economic rationalism -

(MU/W/104) [MU 3] Yes, its relies far too much of economic rationalism and not enough on actual Customer Focus.

- neg., practice, you still have staff problems

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] you still have the problem staff.

- *neg., practice, lack of support been given by certain members (of the TMT)/ support has actually got worse*

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] the [lack of] support been given by certain members to the group.
(MU/W/95) [MU 1] And we are saying in fact that it seems that it has actually got worse.

D2GA: neg., practice, not backing it (customer focus) up [note how this is the opposite to carrying the thinking out in TMT]/ not saying what is expected of you/ should be made more aware of customer focus/ no encouragement to provide customer focus/ I blame management for not following things up/ nobody seems to think any better of you if you try and do customer focus yourself/ not a lot comes down to me/ trying to implement the things we are trained to do but no one is there to support you or say "yes that's a good job"/ its not filtering down to any great depth or degree to the actual nuts and bolts - the staff// we'll get the directional memo's, the black and white stuff but there is no face to face contact/ we keep saying what the public are wanting but the TMT work on things they wish to give the public/ there is absolutely no way we can do these things now/ TMT want high customer focus but they are not willing to put the actual money into it/

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] and so there's no - how can I say this, the people want high customer focus but I don't think that they're willing to put in the actual money that

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] There is absolutely no way that we can actually do these things now

(MU/W/51) [MU 7] We keep asking, we keep saying what the public are wanting, what the people want but Management work on things that they wish to give the public.

(FT/W/190) [FT/5] and we'll get directional memos but its all sort of black and white on paper rather than the face to face contact

(FT/W/189) [FT/4] but it is not filtering down to any great depth or degree to the actual nuts and bolts, the staff themselves that actually have to put this into practice.

(FT/W/186) [FT/3] If you try and put the things into, you know implement all the things we are trained to do and all the things, and if you try and do it on your own nobody seems to be there to help you or support you or say yes, that's a good job.

(FT/W/186) [FT/3] So basically form what comes down to me, not a great deal.

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] And a lot of these, and I blame management partially for that because I don't think they follow things up.

(FT/W/186) [FT/3] And the other side of it from their point of view as far as I'm concerned is, nobody seems to feel, to think any better of you, if you try and do it yourself.

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] but not backed up.

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] Not where we are, in Human resources, not really. No.

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] I think there should be more, we (workers) should be made more aware of it (customer focus)

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] because they're not given some sort of encouragement to actually provide a good customer focus to the customers.

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] I mean managers.

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] and there is nothing I suppose encouraging the workers to actually provide a good service to the customers

(SA/W/132) [SA 1] I mean, there is no encouragement.

(SA/W/132) [SA 1] there is no you know, you are just there to do the job

(SA/W/132) [SA 1] I mean, there is no encouragement.

- neg., practice, that's how its generally been/ that's how the TMT tend to work

(MU/W/51) [MU 7] That's how its generally been. You follow what I'm saying there? Yeah.

(MU/W/53) [MU 7] Yes, that's how they tend to be working.

- *when some one up the top gets it they come down heavy*

(SA/W/185) [SA 3] . And when someone up the top gets it they come down heavy.

- not that you ever get in deep trouble/ you would never loose your job over it

(SA/W/187) [SA 3] Well, not that you ever get in deep trouble

(SA/W/187) [SA 3] but I mean if you weren't to do these things that would probably not look too well. would it.

(SA/W/189) [SA 3] You would never loose your job.

(SA/W/187) [SA 3] I don't think it would ever get that far

- *we need to make a lot more informative brochures/ there not enough written material/ there should be more brochures to say OK go to this area, go to that*

(KP/W/122) [KP 5] We need to make a lot more informative brochures to help the customers.

(KP/W/124) [KP 5] Yep. There's not enough written material -

(KP/W/124) [KP 5] Whereas there should be more brochures to say OK go to this area, go to that area.

- pos., practice, we're starting to develop that now

(KP/W/124) [KP 5] we're starting to develop now.

- neg., practice, there's not enough of that

(KP/W/124) [KP 5] There's not enough of that -

- *TMT could have the monetary resources if they really wanted to / its a little bit of the idea we don't have the resources but they (TMT) do if they wanted to/ if the organisation had more money or more allocation to it*

(MU/W/163) [MU 6] And I think probably if we had, that the organisation had more money or allocation to the customer focus - more of it - it would seem.

(MU/W/104) [MU 3] Its a little bit of the idea of we don't have the resources to put this in here but they do have if they want to,

(MU/W/106) [MU 3] they could have the monetary resources to do that if they really wanted to.

- people at the top are the ones making the decisions about money

(MU/W/163) [MU 6] because those at the top are the ones that are making the decisions about money that

- *TMT giving us the training but dropping our working hours: TMT saying isn't this wonderful, this is all going to happen and then they dropped our hours*

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] My personal experience of this is that quite recently we've been given a whole lot of training for Customer Focus with guides and tour and things like that

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] and they've just dropped our hours.

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] given those hours that have been dumped on us.

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] they were giving this training they were saying 'we want you to give a high customer focus'.

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] there willing to gives to give this training to you, blah, blah, blah, blah -
(MU/W/72) [MU 3] and it was all 'isn't this wonderful this is all going to happen' sort of thing and then they dropped the hours to 30 hours a fortnight

- example of where TMT have dropped the working hours for attendants

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] We were working 40 hour fortnights, 35 hours part-time of course, 45 work hours per fortnightly and in those hours, given the amount of people that we had -we could do tours And the - we hire people,

- neg., practice, TMT have dumped our hours/ TMT have dumped a couple of people and not replaced them

(MU/W/72) [MU 3] So the fact that they've dumped all our hours
(MU/W/72) [MU 3] and dumped a couple of people and not replaced them.

- *not training people properly/ there isn't any follow up training/ not letting people get to training*

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] But you still hear a lot of other workers saying 'we keep asking for training and we're not getting it'

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] And also there I don't think they train people properly

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] and I don't think there is any follow up training.

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] From our [workers] point of view, from my personal point of view, being a switch board operator, I can't get to go to all the training anyway

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] So when they do these training sessions, they tend to leave the switchboard out of that.

- *having to fight to get to go training courses*

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] Whereas I have to fight to get on these things

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] and I think that if you have to fight to get onto training programs to treat the customers better, I find that very poor, very poor.

- *there are things we're not made aware of: TMT are not aware of things that we know/ we don't know what's happening/ don't know how things are happening/ don't know what's happening with customer focus with externals, only internals/*

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] We don't know what exactly what's happening.

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] we know things are happening but we don't know how its happening

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] and a lot of this stuff we find out that they (TMT) may not be aware of

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] and I suppose they (TMT) find out a lot of stuff that we are never made aware of.

(SA/W/192) [SA 4] Not knowing a great deal about it externally, but internally yes, yes.

- staff hear things that the TMT are not quite happy with what staff are doing/
we're ware their may be a perception of a problem with the TMT dealing with us/ the staff bar talk [in context that nothing is said about it]

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] You know, like the "bar talk", stuff like that with people you know.

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] You know if we're doing the right thing of, if there is a perception of a problem with dealing with us down our end or what have you.

(SA/W/144) [SA 3] And we hear things like that 'they're (TMT) not quite happy with what they (staff) are doing'.

- neg., practice, and we're not made aware of customer focus

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] and we're not.

- I think they've (managers) have tried and that's where it falls apart

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] I think they've tried

(SA/W/86) [SA 1] and that's where I think it falls apart.

- *if management encouraged us to be customer focused then we would do it/ there is no initiative by management (see also D2GA - not backing it up/ no encouragement to do it)*

(SA/W/126) [SA 1] Well this is the way I feel, if they gave us some sort of encouragement to treat our customers equally or better, then we would do it.

(SA/W/126) [SA 1] There is not initiative.

- *not being able to work as I want to work/ not having ownership of what I'm doing*

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] I can not work as I want to work.

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] Because I like to have ownership of what I'm doing.

- that's the worst aspect of customer focus to me

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] Well for me the worst aspects are that

- I find this everyday and its frustrating

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] I front this everyday and it frustrates me enormously.

- *not having a complete whole in the organisation*

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] But we don't have a complete whole there.

- only doing little parts of things

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] Where at the moment I just do a little part of that.

- staff being continually moved around/ one day files, the next day putting paper on files

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] And we are continually moving around.

(SA/W/107) [SA 6] So one time it will just be doing files. another day it will be putting pieces of paper on file.

- *there isn't a lot of information on what workers responsibilities towards customers are*

(SA/W/177) [SA 8] because there isn't a lot of information that I have actually seen going around as to what my responsibilities are towards my customer.

- *no procedures or training been put in place*

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] but there's no set procedures been put down or no training or anything like that to sort of back it up.

- *no one saying this is what is expected of you/ showing you how to go about it (customer focus)*

(SA/W/60) [SA 5] and not sort OK this is what's expected of you as well

(SA/W/60) [SA 5] but its never been actually, but no one has actually sat down with us and said OK this is what it says and this is what we expect of you and this is how we want you to go about it.

- *knowing things that you could do to make it first class*

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] Now there are a number of things you could do in the place to make it world class

- *things your know yourself are wrong which customers pick up on/ things which should have been fixed months ago/*

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] The things that you know yourself are wrong with the place and they [customers] pick up on.

- *tripping over a slab/ should have got rid of an a decent surface laid/*

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] and they might trip over a slab

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] which should have been fixed months ago you know and this sort of thing.

(KP/W/109) [KP 2] or should have it been gotten rid of and a decent surface laid.

- *dealing with complaints when they are out of your capacity to be able to remedy them/ if its something that's out of your capabilities of doing something about*

(KP/W/106) [KP 1] Dealing with peoples complaints.

(KP/W/106) [KP 1] Obviously when they may be out of your capacity to be able to remedy them.

(KP/W/108) [KP 1] if its something that's out of your capabilities of doing something about

- *not having it, supplying it the customer goes away disappointed*

(AG/W/142) [AG 10] and we don't have it at all, that's all.

(AG/W/142) [AG 10] We can't supply it.

(AG/W/142) [AG 10] so they go away disappointed.

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - COMMITMENT

D1AA: not doing unnecessary things, not doing things not required/ not wasting time and effort/ not trundling along with the old systems/ its very easy to get side tracked from our core business/ not wasting time on side issues

(BF/W/48) [BF 5] because its very easy to get side-tracked.

(BF/W/48) [BF 5] and its very easy to get side-tracked from our defined core business and what our job really is what our focus really should be.

(BF/W/48) [BF 5] so lets not waste our time on side issues

(SA/W/79) [SA 8] There's not point doing more that is necessary or rather not necessary,

(SA/W/79) [SA 8] but more that, not even required

(SA/W/79) [SA 8] because that's waste of time and effort

(AG/W/26) [AG 9] So instead of trundling along in the old systems, whatever the systems may have been.

D2AA-1-1: pos., practice, what's talked about is what happens/ a lot of things they (TMT) are promising are happening

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] Well we've got - well it has happened.

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] So it is happening, its been done.

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] So a lot of the things they're promising are happening.

- talked about a centennial enhancement plan and it has happened/ talked about a Hale recreational improvement area and it has happened/ talked about getting in consultants to improve the park and it has happened

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] They've talked about a centennial enhancement plan and all this sort of thing.

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] they've talked about a Hale recreational area improvement and all these things have happened.

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] They've told us that they were going to get consultants into the Park to look at ways of improving it and they've done that.

- pos., practice, I have received training

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] From my own point of view, I have received training.

- *its a lotteries commission donated funding*

(KP/W/151) [KP 2] Well this is a Lotteries Commission donated funding.

D3D1: got to present the right front to the customer/ got to be customer orientated/ applying strategies to service the customer needs/ Not only giving customer focus services but also using it for your own use

(AG/W/2) [AG 1] and from that then applying Gallery strategies to service the customer needs.

(BF/W/60) [BF 1] but as public servants we've got to present the right front to our customers and public.

(BF/W/60) [BF 1] No, I think in this day and age you really got to be customer oriented.

(FT/W/49) [FT/10] and also when we have trainees, I emphasise that with trainees as well, not only to giving customer focus service but for their own use every day when they work as part of the team.

- *having a charter/ having a charter is something is something that you must do*

(BF/W/60) [BF 1] And most people have got a customer charter
(BF/W/60) [BF 1] and its just something you have to do I think.

- *having staff all trained*

(SA/W/36) [SA 9] From there I guess having the training and by resources I mean staff all trained.

- *talking about it/ identifying things on the white board that are required*

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] Well by having identified.

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] talking it out

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] and identifying in white-board sessions and that.

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] what is required

- practice, I think we have gone through that process/ had sessions on that over the last two to three years

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] I think we have gone through that process a little bit

(AG/W/48) [AG 1] and we have had sessions in one form or another over the last two/three years probably.

- *having things available to enable you to service customers quickly*

(AG/W/70) [AG 7] and trying to get - having the information available to you so you can do it quickly

- *having a very good knowledge of the Acts and Regulations*

(FT/W/49) [FT/10] And being here as long as I've been here, I mean, I would say I have very good knowledge of it

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - BARRIERS/PROBLEMS

D2E2: restriction, limitations to what we can do and what you can say / getting caught up/ making it hard to deal with change hard/ workers encountering problems/ things that impinge on how we service clients/ there are constraints

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] that impinge on how we do that.

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] within - there are constraints.

(FT/W/127) [FT/1] and feeling a little bit restricted in being able to deal with somebody who doesn't necessarily deserve our help (laughing)

(FT/W/127) [FT/1] in certain instances, so you feel a little bit restricted as a result of that, what you can say, I think and what you can do.

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] You get caught up in.

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] its a limitation of what you can do

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] and so it makes it hard to deal with change,
(AG/W/232) [AG 8] we are also restricted,

- *I can't see any better way to improve without being given more staff and more funds/ if we had more people we could provide a better service*

(AG/W/232) [AG 8] – I can't see any better ways to improve apart from giving us more staff and more money to run a better program

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] If we had perhaps 10 more people, we'd probably feel that we could give a better service.

- practice, we probably all feel that way

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] And I think we probably all feel that way.

- *government policy an other external factors*

(BF/W/20) [BF 7] within Government policy and other environmental factors

- *we're a bit management heavy/ at the top*

(FT/W/232) [FT/3] not at the top.

(FT/W/232) [FT/3] I think we are a bit management heavy.

- *neg., practice, we don't have enough time because there's so few of us/ don't have the physical resources/ we're a small group/ we're physically stretched to provide this service at times/ we've all got heavy work loads'*

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] I think for our organisation here. because we're a small group of people. 40 odd people for a State.

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] we don't have the physical human resources.

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] but there's only X amount of us

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] and this is always what we're saying - we don't have enough time because there's so few of us, we don't have enough people.

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] So we're really physically stretched to supply this service at times.

(BF/W/81) [BF 6] you know we've all got real heavy work loads.

(BF/W/90) [BF 9] I think, we're a very small agency

- *funds being limited*

(AG/W/232) [AG 8] but with funds being limited and things like that

- *a lot of things haven't yet come to the surface/ problems that have been there before*

(AG/W/216) [AG -4] and a lot of things haven't yet come to the surface.

(AG/W/216) [AG -4] problems that have been there before

(AG/W/216) [AG -4] but they are only just sort of really coming to light.

- *having a job to do/ very rigid framework/ just doing a job every day/ hearing another day another dollar*

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] rather than coming in to just a job every day

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] and to work, you hear "another day, another dollar".

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] that you have a job to do

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] and your within a framework which is very rigid

- find very frustrating

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] and this is what I find very frustrating in government work.

- *supervisors not letting me work as I want to work (see D2G)*

(SA/W/109) [SA 6] Because we have a supervisor that's holding that aspect and giving it out.

- *not doing things right/ people not coming through the doors*

(AG/W/225) [AG 5] and if we're not doing the right thing

(AG/W/225) [AG 5] people don't come through the front door.

G16: there are problem areas/ putting us in the bad spot/ poor treatment/

(BF/W/55) [BF 8] although there are problems - there are always problems -

(SA/W/164) [SA 7] The workers are the ones encountering the problems.

(SA/W/218) [SA 9] There are pockets of, there are problem areas

(SA/W/218) [SA 9] and I think it doesn't matter how, what the intentions of the agency or the majority of staff have as far as customer focus goes there will always, well I won't say there will always be problem areas but it probably relates to cells or individuals rather than and agency or Branch perspective.

(FT/W/163) And it puts us in a bad spot too.

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] I'm thinking when people come through the door, what would be bad?

- *not putting it across in the right manner to customers*

(SA/W/82) [SA 9] but if your not putting it back across in the right manner to the client I guess there would be a perception of poor service.

- *there may be communication problems/ not getting their thoughts of knowledge across to clients*

(SA/W/220) [SA 9] There may be communication problems.

(SA/W/220) [SA 9] may not be able to get their ideas or thoughts or knowledge across to the client base

- *cultural problems/ internal conflicts*

(SA/W/220) [SA 9] and that can be of various reasons, probably cultural springs to mind.

(AG/W/207) [AG 3] because there are those internal kind of conflicts as well.

- *skill deficiencies*

(SA/W/220) [SA 9] I guess the other aspect is there are areas of, where there is skill a lacking as far as the tasks.

- practice, probably at the lower levels

(SA/W/220) [SA 9] I would think that would generally be at the lower levels but not necessarily.

- *lack of competition in government/ lax at wanting to achieve higher goals (in reference to creating a good image for our customers in A1-1B)/ lack of competitors*

(FT/W/54) [FT/1] Which I suppose is difficult in government because there's is that lack of competition in certain instances with things that you do.

(FT/W/54) [FT/1] You sort of become a little bit lax I suppose at times with wanting to achieve a higher goal.

(BF/W/60) [BF 1] We haven't got any competitors

- *we're doing this because it is important/ to hell with everything else/ sometimes thinking that we exist just to service ourselves/ getting a result at any cost/ forgetting fairness/ using our relationships with others to get things*

(FT/W/132) [FT/2] but I think the ministry sometimes does that too [is there to service itself].

(FT/W/134) [FT/2] I think we tend to forget that.

(FT/W/134) [FT/2] I think we go a little bit to get a result at any costs sometime, we forget fairness.

(FT/W/134) [FT/2] Because we can use our relationships with traders lets say to get things.

(FT/W/134) [FT/2] they'll give it to us without us begging, yeah

(FT/W/134) [FT/2] but I think we do forget that we are, we do have that line to cross.

(AG/W/94) [AG 93] Well we are doing this because we like doing this because we think it is important, to hell with everybody else.

- *not mentioning administration fees in advertising/ finding out you have to pay once you get here*

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] like what we put out in our advertising we sometimes don't mention that there is an administration fee,

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] but sometimes people come in and they find out they have to pay

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] and think that they have to pay there or ask a question.

- I think that is one of the worst aspects to customer focus

(AG/W/94) [AG 93] I think that is one of the worst aspects, really

- *grotty toilets*

(AG/W/118) [AG 6] Toilets that are grotty.

- *putting on exhibitions of no educational value*

(AG/W/100) [AG 5] For the Art Gallery, putting on exhibitions that have no educational value

- *pandering to much to popular tastes*

(AG/W/100) [AG 5] , or pandering too much to very popular tastes.
(AG/W/100) [AG 5] which is what we don't do, I don't think.

- *sticking rigidly and pedantically to the rules and procedures*

(FT/W/104) [FT/8] and sticking rigidly and pedantic to sets of rules and procedures, which are important in and of themselves,

- *not giving the right information/ not liaisoning with every employee*

(FT/W/162) [FT/9] Not giving the right information.
(FT/W/162) [FT/9] not liaisoning with every employee.

- neg., practice, that's what happens in this organisation/ that's the worst aspect in this organisation

(FT/W/162) [FT/9] What happens throughout the Ministry, we get new employees coming in, and they'll just come in,

(FT/W/162) [FT/9] and they don't tell us who they are, where they're working, what are they doing here, how did they get there, you know?

(FT/W/162) [FT/9] So that's what I think is the worst aspect.

G 16-2: things that would concern me greatly/ things that should be of concern to the agency/ things that this agency does not do/ worst things about this agency/ unusual things

(KP/W/22) [KP 4] which is very unusual

(FT/W/140) [FT/5] then that would concern me personally, greatly

(FT/W/104) [FT/8] but the focus can become skewed.

(FT/W/140) [FT/5] and I think that it should concern all staff in the Ministry

- *not meeting the needs of the customer*

(FT/W/140) [FT/5] The worst aspects. Well I guess I would just turn it around and say - If we didn't meet those needs

(FT/W/140) [FT/5] if it was not meeting the perceived needs of our clients and customers.

- *not training staff good enough to pass out the information/ the training part is not good enough/ the people who are training staff have not idea themselves/ the blind leading the blind*

(FT/W/167) [FT/10] I don't feel that our trainees, as well as any new staff that come in to our office, are really trained enough to give out that information.

(FT/W/167) [FT/10] and I'd just don't think the training part of it is enough

(FT/W/167) [FT/10] Or they have people, I find in this office they have people training staff who haven't actively worked in that position for many, many years and basically have no idea.

(FT/W/167) [FT/10] So I find it's the blind leading the blind

- *it stems down from management/ management not doing their job/ its just the way the office is/ management do not run this office/ management don't get involved enough/ individuals run this office not management*

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] Well, I think it stems down from Management.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] and it stems down from Management

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] because I feel Management don't do their job

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] because its just the way the office is, so to speak, you know and they're [management] not

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] I don't consider Management does [runs this office]

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] and personally I don't think Management get involved enough in what goes on in this office, whether it be here or our Head Office.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] I have worked up at our Head Office for some time as well and I don't feel that Management get involved enough.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] and there are individuals in this office who I consider run the office.

- *getting into a rut that you can't get out of/ its the way things are around here*

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] It's just a rut that you get into and you can't get out of.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] and its just the way that things are.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] -. So that's just the way things are in here

- a lot of us have been here a long time/ a lot us have grown up together/ been here 11 or 12 years/ we're a small tight unit

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] A lot of us have been here for a long time.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] I always say we've grown up together because we have.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] A lot of us have been here well over 11/12 years and worked together

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] Business names is a very small closely knit department.

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] I wouldn't even call us a department our little bits here.

(KP/W/22) [KP 4] And our guides have been with us for about 12 years.

(KP/W/22) [KP 4] Our guides have been here for so long

- volunteers have a shelf life of three years and then they are off

(KP/W/22) [KP 4] because volunteers have a shelve life of about three years and then their off.

- *new people have a difficult time fitting in*

(FT/W/169) [FT/10] We have a situation at the moment where we have a particular staff member who has come down from one of our regional offices and is having a very difficult time fitting in

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - THREATS

G18: outsourcing/ customer will go elsewhere

(SA/W/135) [SA 2] Outsourcing is a thing that comes up every now and then.

(SA/W/135) [SA 2] I suppose the ultimate threat with anything is that well, if we can't provide a service then they will go some where else for it.

- *its a very competitive world/ if we don't offer what's wanted I guess we would be left behind*

(MU/W/145) [MU 4] its a very competitive world

(MU/W/145) [MU 4] and if they don't offer what's wanted, I guess we'd be left behind - if nobody bothered.

(MU/W/145) [MU 4] Well if they don't,

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - POOR RELATIONSHIPS

D2GC: neg., practice, There isn't the two way communication (relationship) between workers and the TMT/ TMT don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey - a level 1/ I was taken to a couple of fire stations last week, which is the first time I've been shown anything/ TMT are making commitments on behalf of the agency which we don't see the finalising/ there's a division between Corporate Services and operations/ the two just wont mix/ in this organisation we have the academics and we have the lesser mortals (attendants, corporate service staff)/ there's no communication/ its a false communication/ its not the real communication that's needed/ TMT have their own communication with what they're doing which they send down to us/ TMT haven't gone to the roots to consult with what's needed/ its very difficult to communicate with them [scientists] within this building/ there's no real communication in the building/ its difficult to have a customer focus when you can't actually contact people within the museum/ the upper echelon are not in touch/ that's where the communication lacks/ false communication/ but with that there's also a degree of suspicion as well/ there could be more talk there/ there's a bit of a hole there/ one division will keep things from the other

(KP/W/185) [KP 5] or one division will keep things from the other division.

(KP/W/158) [KP 5] There's a little bit of a hole down there.

(KP/W/158) [KP 5] There could be more talk in that way from them

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] But with that there's also a degree of suspicion as well.

(MU/W/168) [MU 7] But this is where I think you get false communication

(MU/W/168) [MU 7] That's where the communication lacks.

(MU/W/168) [MU 7] I think they think its impossible that an attendant, which they consider down the ladder, could possibly know anything to tell them up there.

(MU/W/161) [MU 6] And the lack of communication with the upper Administrative area is sad neglect.

(MU/W/159) [MU 6] So that's - as far as the upper echelon, I don't think they're in touch.

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] but they haven't gone to the roots to consult what is needed.

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] They (TMT) have their own communication with what they're doing send it down to us

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] (long pause) How do I put it - more or less there's no communication.

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] but its like a false communication.

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] Its not the real one that's needed. Its not a very good way of putting it.

(MU/W/62) [MU 1] Well we have it in this organisation a situation where we have the academics and we have the lesser mortals.

(MU/W/142) [MU 3] its a very difficult to actually communicate with them in this building.

(MU/W/142) [MU 3] this actual - and that's throws us back on Customer Focus, if there's no real communication in the building itself.

(MU/W/142) [MU 3] It's very difficult to actually have customer focus when you can't actually contact those people within the museum anyway.
(MU/W/161) [MU 6] I don't know. I don't think they're (TMT) in touch
(BF/W/127) [BF 9] Once again I think it comes back to that their (TMT) making commitments on behalf of the organisation and we don't see the finalising.
(BF/W/105) [BF 3] I don't think so, no. I think they see me as a lackey.
(BF/W/107) [BF 3] they don't actually see me as a customer, they see me as a Level 1
(BF/W/124) [BF 8] And when I was taken out last week to have a look at a couple of the fire stations,
(BF/W/124) [BF 8] which is the first time I'd ever been shown anything
(BF/W/146) [BF 3] Well there's a division between, there's Corporate Services and then there's Operations
(BF/W/146) [BF 3] There has always been that division between Corporate Services and Operations.
(BF/W/146) [BF 3] and the two just wont mix.
(SA/W/173) [SA 8] that's as to the relationship of the service that's is required of me.
(SA/W/173) [SA 8] I don't think there's the two way communication there.

- hard for me to comment on that question/ there's not a lot I can comment on that

(BF/W/86) [BF 8] There's not a great deal I can say because I know so little.
(SA/W/173) [SA 8] So I think its hard for me to comment on that question.

- that's the problem

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] You know that's the problem.

- that's still where it keeps getting unstuck

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] and that still where it keeps getting unstuck.

- So the TMT don't know what the workers are doing

(MU/W/161) [MU 6] So they don't know what we're (workers are) doing.

• *workers would like to have a part of the decision*

(KP/W/158) [KP 5] because some of their decisions - we would like to have a part of.

• *unless the management keeps to its words it will loose the trust of its workers*

(KP/W/129) [KP 6] Unless the Management keeps to his words, the words that they said to the people, that way the Management will have to trust with management otherwise they've lost their [workers] trust.

• *workers are too frightened to speak out/ they feel intimidate later on down the track*

(MU/W/168) [MU 7] but then I know a lot of people are too frightened to speak out
(MU/W/168) [MU 7] because they feel like they will be intimidated later on down the track

- *if we all shared it we would come out with something better*

(KP/W/185) [KP 5] where if they all shared it we would be able to put it together to come out with something a lot better.

- *one think one thing and one says another/ get the TMT together and they either wouldn't talk about it or just gloss over it*

(MU/W/168) [MU 7] because one (TMT) thinks one thing, one says the other
(MU/W/168) [MU 7] and they (TMT) tend to if you got them together well they either wouldn't or just gloss it over.

- *neg., practice, the academics feel that they are above offering a service but they are/ academics feel that they don't have to put themselves out in any way*

(MU/W/62) [MU 1] And its so - there is a tendency at times to feel that we are all above, actually offer a service -

(MU/W/62) [MU 1] but your are.

(MU/W/62) [MU 1] and really you don't have do anything - you don't have to put yourself out in any way.

- *neg., practice, they're (people who work in this organisation) a bit hard to get on with, most people are/ just intolerance with some staff/ people think the only way they can achieve anything is by constantly screaming and shouting/ coming across in a very aggressive manner*

(MU/W/95) [MU 1] the main thing that came out of it [survey] was the intolerance

(MU/W/66) [MU 1] Just intolerance with some of the staff

(MU/W/66) [MU 1] where they think that the only way that they can achieve anything is actually to bully people by constantly screaming and shouting

(MU/W/66) [MU 1] and literally coming across in a very aggressive manner.

(MU/W/31) [MU 1] Generally just - they're a bit had to get on with most people are. [inaudible]

(MU/W/68) [MU 1] With fellow staff.

- *neg., practice, that's the worst bit to customer focus*

(MU/W/66) [MU 1] And that's the worst aspect of it.

- *Corporate Services bends over backwards/ they pull guys out of the manure/ look after the operations staff*

(BF/W/150) [BF 3] I mean we all run around and look after them

(BF/W/150) [BF 3] and pull them out on the manure when they make mistakes and stuff like that.

(BF/W/146) [BF 3] I mean the Corporate Services bend over backwards to.

(BF/W/146) [BF 3] they pull guys out of the manure on quite a few occasions

- *they (operation staff) just go back and bad mouth us*

(BF/W/146) [BF 3] and then they just go back and bad mouth us again.

(BF/W/148) [BF 3] and they see us, they come in here and you know "what do you guys do".

- *there's too many FTE's/ we're out here fighting fires, what do you do anyway/*

(BF/W/146) [BF 3] Like Corporate Services there's too much FTE
 (BF/W/146) [BF 3] and what do you do anyway,
 (BF/W/146) [BF 3] we're out here fighting fires but what are you doing?

- *operations don't see that we actually go out there and help them with the fires*

(BF/W/148) [BF 3] They don't see that we actually go out there and help them with the fires: the OP's rooms

- *I don't get very much involved/ I'm not allowed to get involved*

(BF/W/86) [BF 8] Well you see I don't really get very much involved.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] I'm not there to be involved.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] I'm not allowed.

- *I really know so little about this whole thing (customer focus)/ I just answer the phone and do the typing/ I've only been here a short while/ I've never had an induction/ I've never been told anything*

(BF/W/86) [BF 8] I really know so little about this whole thing.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] I'm really just on the end of a phone, answering a phone and typing stuff that people give me to type.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] Now I have been here for a few months now.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] So I know so little.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] I've never had an induction.
 (BF/W/86) [BF 8] I've never been told anything.

- *TMT don't gives us feedback on the service I provide*

(SA/W/173) [SA 8] but I don't feel as though there's a feedback between the service I provide.

- *I don't think the TMT are aware of the service I provide*

(SA/W/173) [SA 8] I don't think management are aware of the service that I am actually providing.

- *TMT will always put the customer well in front of the employee when it comes to pleasing/ TMT will compromise the employee when it comes to pleasing*

(MU/W/122) [MU 6] and would probably put the customers well in front of the employee when it comes to pleasing.
 (MU/W/122) [MU 6] So she's able to - always, she'll always comprise I guess with us (workers) to please the visitors, the clients whoever it is.

CATEGORY - PROCESSES/SYSTEMS/METHODS

THEME - RELATIONSHIPS

D2GC-1: Its important to have a pretty good relationship with the people you work with/ feedback communication with the people you work with/ all of

our jobs rely on the other people we work with/ being tolerant of your fellow office workers/ liaison between us and the TMT/ the relations between the divisions were a lot more clarified

(MU/W/31) [MU 1] being tolerant of your fellow office workers.

(MU/W/31) [MU 1] Working with others, by being tolerant

(MU/W/31) [MU 1] and I think tolerant is the key word in working with this office.

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] I think its important that you have a pretty good working relationship with the people you have to work with for a start.

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] Because a lot of, probably all of our jobs rely on other people that we work.

(BF/W/17) [BF 6] So that's all your feedback, your communications etc.,

(KP/W/158) [KP 5] liaisons between us and themselves.

(KP/W/185) [KP 5] so the relations between each division were a lot more clarified and things like that.

- *pos., practice, the camaraderie seems to be very good*

(BF/W/124) [BF 8] and the camaraderie that seems to be there is really good.

- *pos., practice, I feel the way the TMT come across to me is good/ open sort of a way*

(KP/W/154) [KP 3] - I feel like the way they come across to me is good.

(KP/W/154) [KP 3] open sort of way.

- but I can't speak for all of them

(KP/W/154) [KP 3] But I can't speak for them - all of them

- *we tend to relate a little more on the personal level*

(KP/W/154) [KP 3] Its a, yeah I know them - we tend to related a little - more on a bit of a personal level.

- sometimes with some of the high management

(KP/W/154) [KP 3] sometimes with some of the high management and its

D2GB: supportive (seems the opposite to not backing it up in D2GA)/ flexibility/ my manager is always with the workers/ if you've got problems you can ask her questions/ no-ones too low/ my managers is honest/ if I need help she will help me/ my boss is great, I've never has a boss like her

(BF/W/107) [BF 3] whereas - Ms X is great. I mean I've never had a boss like Ms X.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] They, we've got 4 Managers that I think of.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] Our Manager, Ms X is a Fleet Manager, she always down there.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] If you've got any problems, you can go and ask her any questions.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] and she's honest.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] No one's too low -

(BF/W/107) [BF 3] I mean, if I need help, she'll come and help

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] In terms of giving us the flexibility

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] Greater flexibility

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] their a little bit more flexible than perhaps others.

- I'm a level one and she's a level 6 but she will come and help me

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] I mean I'm a Level 1, she's a Level 6, but she will come and help me do my work

- if you need to get told off, she'll tell you off/ if your done something well, she'll say congratulations and well done.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] If you need to get told off, she'll tell you off.

(BF/W/101) [BF 3] if your done something well, she'll say congratulations and well done.

- *in the times we work/ when we do things*

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] with our own time

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] in terms of when we do things.

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] whether we start early and finish later.

- this is a good thing

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] I don't know. I think its really good.

- *TMT supportive of the role that we do/ we get good support from our management*

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] Our managers are quite supportive in terms of the role we do.

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] and we get very good support from our manager and our acting manager

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] and their very supportive in terms of what we are doing with our own people.

- *to provide customers with reports/ building report with our customers/ meeting with our clients*

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] to provide them their reports.

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] building a report with our clients

(SA/W/141) [SA 2] in terms of meeting with our clients. our own clients that is.

CATEGORY - CHANGE

THEME - PROCESS

D3A: changing from you get the service we give you to giving the service they should get/ its certainly working towards changing/ gearing towards customer focus/ changing ways of doing things/ I think there has been a shift to provide a better service/ I think people are more aware of, in tune with customer focus/ tuning in and getting into the areas of what customer focus is about/ changing times/ the realignment [as opposed to the alignment in " what does the customer need and how can we meet that need (A1A) rather than resorting to the rules, regulations and process (elements of standards in A2 and elements of knowing what to do in D2A, which collectively are the old attitude elements, name bureaucratic in B4D)/ turning it around/

(FT/W/56) [FT 1] Because you can turn it around
 (BF/W/72) [BF 5] Whereas now we really, because of changing times, even now without the restructure or re whatever you want to call,
 (FT/W/202) [FT/7] I think there has been a shift in onus to provide a better customer focus.
 (FT/W/224) [FT/1] Well, tuning into and getting into the areas I suppose of what customer focus is all about
 (FT/W/224) [FT/1] and to be more in tune of, you know simple things.
 (FT/W/224) [FT/1] I think people are more aware of customer focus
 (FT/W/224) [FT/1] Now we're I think, more in tune once again within our division where I'm from.
 (BF/W/121) [BF 7] what does the customer need, how can we meet that need - rather than resorting to the Rules and Regulations and processes.
 (SA/W/43) [SA 2] think its changed around from you get the service we give you to giving the service that they should get.
 (SA/W/45) [SA 2] A change from more of a you know,
 (SA/W/204) [SA 6] Its certainly working at change there is no doubt about that.
 (SA/W/204) [SA 6] gearing towards customer focus.
 (AG/W/154) [AG 1] They are trying to change ways throughout.
 (AG/W/182) [AG 10] I must admit it has changed over the last six months since our new director.
 (KP/W/166) [KP 7] because of all the changes what we had done recently
 (KP/W/166) [KP 7] And its changed you see.
 (KP/W/166) [KP 7] and because of the changes

- making it easier for yourself as far as work goes

(FT/W/56) [FT 1] and make it easier for yourself as far as work goes and that sort of thing.

- that's what you should be giving the people you are dealing with

(FT/W/224) [FT/1] and that's what you should be giving the people that you are dealing with.

- there is movement

(AG/W/146) [AG 1] There is movement

- getting consultants in to look at what we are doing

(SA/W/204) [SA 6] And we have got a consultant looking a certain aspects in our office which is probably all part of the change.

- changing for the better for the client

(SA/W/47) [SA 2] Changing for the better I think for the client.

- *change in the management structure*

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] In the past because of the change in the Management structure.

- *pos., practice, what I've witnessed in recent years its really turned around that has also modernised our work practices and made us more efficient*

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] Well from what I've witnessed in recent years its really turned around.

(KP/W/147) [KP 2] But then again, that has also modernised our work practices, made us more efficient.

- *pos., practice, I am becoming more aware of it now/ picking up more on this side of thing*

(KP/W/12) [KP 2] so I am becoming more aware of it now.

(KP/W/12) [KP 2] obviously I pick more on that side of things.

- *neg., practice, we haven't concentrated on customer focus as much as other areas of the agency*

(KP/W/12) [KP 2] We haven't concentrated on that area as much as visitor services

- *focus is shifting towards local government [new customers]*

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] and perhaps the focus is now shifting more towards perhaps Local Government

- *can see a movement with the new administration starting to get things moving*

(AG/W/195) [AG 1] Again from the new management, I getting a bit tied up here but I can see movement from.

(AG/W/197) [AG 1] and starting to get things moving.

- *I hope to see change come in the future*

(SA/W/206) [SA 6] Well and how I hope to see the changes come in the future.

(SA/W/206) [SA 6] So one, its very difficult when you are at that point of hoping for change

(SA/W/208) [SA 6] I do (want to see change)

- I want to see a dynamism as there is in the private sector

(SA/W/208) [SA 6] I want to see a dynamism as there is in a business organisation in terms of organising the facilities that we have within the department.

- *we can see some change but you wonder to what degree can see very slow movement of change across government*

(SA/W/206) [SA 6] because we can see some change but you wonder to what degree.

(SA/W/206) [SA 6] Because I've seen very slow movement of change on the whole in government.

(SA/W/206) [SA 6] but its very slow in government.

- *changing form "here is the service we are going to give you" to "this is the service customers should get"*

(SA/W/45) [SA 2] "I'm sorry that's the service that you are going to get. here is your information too bad these are your repayment terms

- informing customers of what they will get

(SA/W/45) [SA 2] to more of a informing people what there terms are.

(SA/W/45) [SA 2] letting them know what their reports are"

- doing things better or differently for customers

(SA/W/45) [SA 2] and in the case of what we're doing downstairs and the case of if there is something different, they might present it differently,
(SA/W/45) [SA 2] do it better for them..

- *noticing a change in the way people are treated over the last 3 -4 years (see treatment in A3)*

(SA/W/43) [SA 2] I've noticed a change in the way people are treated in government offices,
(SA/W/43) [SA 2] from the way they might have been treated 3 or 4 years ago.
(SA/W/43) [SA 2] but I have seen a change.

- *over the years the management focus has changed/ what is expected today is different from what they (TMT) expected some years ago*

(MU/W/109) [MU 4] Over the years, the management focus has changed to
(MU/W/109) [MU 4] - you know what they expect now is different from what they expected some years ago.

D3AC: changing our work practices to give the TMT what they want (suggests a self focus)/ TMT have got certain ideas and that's what goes/ TMT are fairly set/ at the end of the day, the main man at the top decides where the dollars get spent regardless of what the fellow at the bottom is saying/ TMT direct the overall objective of the organisation/ TMT make up all these plans of what they want to do

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] At the end of the day, the main man at the top decides where the dollars get spent regardless of what the fellow at the bottom is saying.

(MU/W/112) [MU 4] As I say they've got certain ideas and that's what goes.

(MU/W/112) [MU 4] I suppose they are fairly set.

(MU/W/112) [MU 4] they give what they believe should go

(AG/W/175) [AG 7] it is just us changing our work practices to give them [TMT] what they want

(MU/W/117) [MU 5] They (TMT) direct the overall objective of the organisation

(MU/W/123) [MU 7] Well once again, they go ahead and make up all these plans and ideas of what they want to do

- *the TMT are spending dollars on the projects they want to do*

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] and they're (TMT) spending dollars on the projects they want to do.

- *once again its priorities*

(KP/W/149) [KP 2] Its like, once again its priorities.

- *but somebody has to have the ideas don't they?*

(MU/W/112) [MU 4] But somebody has to have the ideas don't they.

- *do the same for the outside customer*

(AG/W/175) [AG 7] and also do the same with the outside customer.

CATEGORY - CHANGE
THEME - MINDSETS/ ATTITUDES

D3AD: changing the attitude/ getting away form the old style mentality of "look there's the rules, we just apply the rules, take a number and wait/ much less emphasis on the organisation and its processes/ turning peoples minds away from concentrating on the internal processes and procedures and structures of an organisation/ that view [old public service mentality in D3AD] has not been eliminated but it has decreased/

(FT/W/224) [FT/1] That sort of mentality is in my view been, not eliminated, but severally decreased and people are now more in tune.

(BF/W/52) [BF 7] and much less emphases on the organisation and its process.

(BF/W/52) [BF 7] Rather than doing everything for the process of the organisation.

(BF/W/52) [BF 7] turning peoples minds away from concentrating on the internal processes and procedures and structures of an organisation.

(BF/W/52) [BF 7] doing everything to meet the needs of the organisation's processes and procedures and rules and frameworks.

(FT/W/157) [FT/8] because you get away from the old style mentality of "Look there's the rules, we'll just apply the rules and we'll deal with you whenever, take a number and wait sort of thing."

- *changing the academics who are still living in the nineteenth century*

(AG/W/182) [AG 10] I think he has got a lot to achieve to get through to some of our academics here

(AG/W/182) [AG 10] who still sort of, in my own mind or my words would be living in the nineteenth century

- museums are full of curatorial staff/ not for the public

(AG/W/182) [AG 10] where a museum is full of these curatorial staff

(AG/W/182) [AG 10] and in time they are not for the public.

CATEGORY - CHANGE
THEME - MINDSETS/ATTITUDES - NEGATIVE

D3A-1: neg., practice, The cultural problem/ Things not changing/ I don't think we are achieving all what we should be achieving/ / yes everybody was suppose to come out of the training thinking "yes we're going to implement these things/ nothing changed dramatically when the charter came out/ I've been here 12 years and focus has remained the same/ we have our allegiance to our organisation first and its internal requirements rather than customer focus/ we put more emphasis on internal requirements, ad hoc information being generated to the internal, nice to know stuff (A1-2) at the expense of servicing the customer (A1)/ some people say responding to letter within 10 days [standard A2] a lesser priority than filling in an actual report for our agency"[D3A-1]/ we're here to service the public and we look after ourselves when we get the chance/ the culture in this organisation is that "we come first and our customers come second"

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] And we keep turning it around, the culture in this organisation is that "we come first and our customers come second".

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] We tend to put more emphasis on internal requirements

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] and ad hoc information being generated to the internal.

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] which is nice to know stuff rather than must know,

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] at the expense of servicing our customers.

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] But some people say "that's [responding to letter within 10 days] a lesser priority than filling in an actual report for our agency"[D3A-1].

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] We're here to service the public and we look after ourselves when we get the chance.

(BF/W/127) [BF 9] I think the other thing is there's a cultural problem

(BF/W/127) [BF 9] in that we have an allegiance to our organisation first and its internal requirements rather than customer focus

(FT/W/135) [FT/3] and yes every body was suppose to come out of that thinking "yes we're going to go in and we're going to implement these things"

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] Well I've been with the Board for 12 years and the focus has fairly well stayed the same.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] What is going on with customer focus? Well nothings changes.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] I didn't see anything changing dramatically from my point of view.

(BF/W/16) [BF 5] So I didn't see, once our customer focus came out in a formal sense, I didn't see anything changing dramatically from what we've always been doing.

(AG/W/41) [AG 10] I don't think we are achieving at all what we should be achieving.

- practice, which I find difficult/ its not

(BF/W/127) [BF 9] which I find difficult at times.

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] Its not, no.

• *always talking about change but there doesn't seem to be the same immediacy*

(SA/W/23) [SA 6] although in government we're always talking about managing change but there doesn't seem to be the same kind of immediacy

• *neg., practice, example, rather than spending time to respond to a letter within 10 days, other people blow it out to six weeks*

(BF/W/129) [BF 9] Like for example, rather than me spending time replying to a letter - and I've a personal objective where I endeavour to reply to a letter the day I get it, so the turnaround, I mean there is 10 days within our charter - and I've seen that in 10 days. Other people blow out to a month, 6 weeks before we get a response back. But I've tried turning it around within the day I receive the letter, endeavour to.

• *things haven't changed since the charter has come into effect, its about the same (see D2AA for charter - customer focus is talked about)*

(SA/W/197) [SA 5] So as a whole I don't think it has changed much since the actual charter has come into effect.

(SA/W/199) [SA 5] Actually its probably about the same.

(SA/W/199) [SA 5] It may have improved a little but not a lot.

- *neg., practice, its a hard shift in the mind from the volunteer [traditional client] to local government/ it really hasn't changed*

(BF/W/74) [BF 5] Well, no, it hasn't really changed.

(BF/W/72) [BF 5] well, its a hard shift in the mind to sort of get away from the volunteer [traditional customer].

APPENDIX 5

SAMPLE OF MEMO'S MADE DURING ANALYSIS OF THE WORKER DATA (Memo's 9 to 42)

Memo 9

(SA/W/45) [SA 2] A change from more of a you know, I'm sorry that's the service that you are going to get, here is your information; too bad these are your repayment terms to more of a service that customers should get

Look carefully at instance where respondents talk about *changing* from 'this is the service you are going to get' (service we provide you) to 'informing customers what they will get/ what we are doing'. This may link in with the different types of attitudes.

Memo 10

Note that getting positive feedback is a type of satisfaction from doing it right for the customers (in G5)

Memo 11

Changing the way we do things can mean fixing things. The process by which you can do this is either by:

- i) going about it the round about way - negative connotation (through management); or
- ii) dealing with one-to-one - positive connotation.

See (SA/W/48) [SA 3]

Memo 12

POSSIBLY A MAJOR FINDING

See (SA/W/50) [SA 3]

Having a good relationship with our customers at our level means providing a service (A1), like fixing things or solving problems.

This can be done in two ways as mentioned at *memo 11*.

Fixing things is a type of service (in A1B) is a sub set of **fixing things straight away which is a manner of treatment (A3)** which is a sub set of **dealing with things on a one-to-one (A4)** which is a subset of **having good relationships with our customers at our level (G13 B)**. Thus **Having good relationships (G 13 B)** is one of the things that **is changing (D3)**.

Workers therefore say that customer focus is about providing better services, services that the customer requires. This is achieved through a process of developing better relationships and understanding of the customer needs. However, when presenting cards during phase two question with the words, "involvement/ relationships", such words conveyed little meaning.

Memo 13

See (SA/W/51) [SA 4]

Suggests that the personal approach [i.e. the one to one] (in ways of responding in A4) is the same as value adding or doing more than in the Top Management Team coding.

Memo 14

See (SA/W/51) [SA 4]

Note that this person is talking about forcing a customer to become aware of what you do. He's also saying something about how his team operates. Another person from this group commented on the fact that you need to develop a relationship with customers over time, yet this person is talking about how the one person deals with the same customer time after time. The context is concerned with making mistakes. To solve the problem he states the riot act - came through the boss. Yet the other person says this is bureaucratic.

This raises an issue of differences in perception when dealing with external and internal customers. Perhaps the issue is the way that people as customers deal with others who are internal clients.

This person suggests the one to one approach in A4 involves selling, informing customers of what we do in C1 **AND** making sure that what we do, is coming from the customer B1B.

Memo 15

(SA/W/56) [SA 5] Customer focus is talked about (in D2AA) but not backed up (D2G)

Also this person goes onto say that "knowing the charter is more or less expected of everyone **without** being told this is what is expected of you"

This suggests that customer focus is talked about by Top Management Teams in terms of carrying the thinking out, yet for workers, this seems to suggest that talking about it is one thing, yet it is not backed up (i.e. not carrying the thinking out).

There is also a difference between knowing what is expected of you (D2AA) versus someone showing you how to do it (opposite to not backing it up (D2G). This could be viewed as carrying the thinking out as in the Top Management Team data.

Memo 16

(SA/W/77) [SA 8] I probably haven't thought too much about customer focus its probably more of a case of just carrying procedures and duties that have been implemented probably through customer focus.

Carrying out procedures (in A4) relates to not having to think about customer focus (same category - A4, relates to conservative way in TMT)

Memo 17

(SA/W/82) [SA 9] You can be as knowledgeable as you like and have as many resources as you like (G16) but it depends on the manner in which you deal with the customer (A4).

Memo 18

See (SA/W/87) [SA 2]

In this passage, the respondent talks about things that negatively effect the way they provide services, for example customers being brash, angry with you. It also suggests that not treating people in a nice manner (as in A4) may also lead to poor customer focus (see G16). The person points out that this should not effect the way they provide a service, yet it does.

They follow this up by saying that people do it alone, do their own customer focus. Staff are not made aware of what is expected of them, except for the customer focus charter which they are merely told to hand out to staff. So most of the D category in practice is negative comments about what Workers are not doing.

In other words, the data suggests that customer focus is as suggested in D2AAA - its just your personal customer focus that you do (in other words, a Going It Alone Strategy). This is similar to the Top Management Team data who say PSMO tell you what to do, yet give you no resources. Therefore staff are behaving in the way that Top Management Team treat them, which is similar to what Top Management Teams said of PSMO.

Memo 19

See (SA/W/91) [SA 2]

Customers always thinking they are right (A4) results in us feeling like the meat in the sandwich (D2I) which is related to managers hearing negative things from customers that they probably don't mean ((D2I)

Memo 20

This relates to *memo 15*

(SA/W/146) [SA 5] I know what they (TMT) expect of us as the branch but I don't know what they do to achieve customer focus.

This suggests that Top Management Team say one thing (D2AA) yet they do not demonstrate the expectations in practice (as detailed in F4)

Memo 21

Note the two comments

(SA/W/157) [SA 6] I feel that I'm going to say things that might appear to be critical (nervousness sounding in voice).

(SA/W/157) [SA 6] I think there is a gap between the way we work and the way we are perceived.

Memo 22

Note when starting Organisation 2 data, the issue of identifying the client and identifying customer needs came up. But it was interesting to note that this was not a significant category for all of the organisation 1 data. Maybe more data will emerge. If not, note this difference from what emerged from Top Management Team.

Memo 23

(AG/W/3) [AG 2] Customer Focus, I guess that the direction of the people working in the institution should be towards providing a service.

Note that this responses was grouped as a title in Category A. Consider also that it implies an attitude (in B in TMT) or alternatively, its about knowing your purpose (in D4 in TMT)

Memo 24

Note that meeting deadlines in standards (A2) **relates to both** meeting impossible deadlines/ impossible task to do/ things that take a couple of weeks to do, not a couple of days/ not meeting deadlines (in Customers being off the mark with what we do/ customers getting upset/ customers holding things against you/ customers not knowing what you have to do to get their result/ not recognising you/ customer is not always right in C0-1) **and** priotising/ putting the customer first/ meeting deadlines requested by customers)in title of CATEGORY B - having a client/ working for a client/ having responsibility for my customers)

Memo 25

A1-1 - looking after customers is related to thinking about what are we here for in D1A.

Memo 26

See (AG/W/19) [AG 6]

Note that knowing the job/ knowing what to do in D2 relates to finding out why customers are happy, not happy in H3, while making customers happy is an item of A1 providing the best possible service

Memo 27

(AG/W/20) [AG 7] It means considering the customer rather than the product[i.e. service]

This suggests customer focus is about category B - having a client versus category A providing services. Or at least it is saying, category B is more important than A.

Memo 28

Note that carrying the thinking out could be placed in category D, our knowledge of ourselves as providers. Carrying the thinking out is explaining the changes that are taking place and therefore should be placed with change (DA) (i.e. D3D)

Memo 29

Customer focus is knowing who the customers are (category B) and focusing your needs towards what they require (servicing in A1A [and B0] - providing a service the client requires). This also relates to A1 - giving the customer what they want. This is all expressed in terms this is what we are here for (i.e. knowing your purpose in D4)

For example:

(AG/W/70) [AG 7] Well its part of it isn't it, it is all about knowing who your customer is (B heading) and focusing your needs towards what they require (A1A). I mean that's why we are here, partly why we are here.

(AG/W/83) [AG 10] I mean customer focus is focusing on the customer and giving what the customer wants.

Memo 30

Note that knowing the job in D2 could equally be termed standards for service delivery in A2.

Memo 31

(AG/W/93) [AG 2] And that can be a source of conflict.

Sources of conflict is a category just made in G19. Note that this could be the name of a bigger category that picks up other items with category G (and possible other categories)

Memo 32

Note category G16-1: Factors associated with poor customer focus/ inward thinking.

Note that this category could be placed with category B4 as a type of attitude (for example, inward attitude).

Note also the item within the category

- *were doing this because it is important/ to hell with everything else*

For example

(AG/W/94) [AG 93] Well we are doing this because we like doing this because we think it is important, to hell with everybody else.

In C0-1 Customers being off the mark with what we do/ could be a sub item within this category. In one instance, respondents are saying that customers are off the mark with what we do, therefore they imply that they continue to do what they need to do (by the fact they develop strategies to inform customers of what we do C1 and C1A) and hence are acting in a way that is related to poor customer focus.

This could be explained by D2GA - management are not backing it up

In terms of talk, G16 and G17 (and hence G2) is not a talk nor walk characteristic. It is an item which impacts on the type of service that is to be provided. Therefore this emerges as a type of intervening condition. What is useful is that workers say customer focus is about providing the best possible service, which means the service we provide must be coming from the customers - providing customers with what they want. However, in practice, customers get grumpy/ irate when we don't provide what they want because what they expect and what we provide are two different things. Hence, the walk is dysfunctional.

In sum C0-1 Customers being off the mark with what we do leads to G17 factors which change my attitude to customers (and G2) and G19 sources of conflict. Once again, these are intervening conditions of the walk of talk.

Memo 33

Trying various exhibitions to reach new audiences (in D1)

For example:

(AG/W/100) [AG 5] I mean we have tried various kinds of exhibitions to reach new audiences.

Note that this gives me a dual sense. On one side of the coin this is a productivity measure to make us more profitable, yet on the other side is that what we are here to do.

Memo 34

If I can't help then pass the customer onto somebody else who can (in A3) is a manner of treatment that we would use. It is also a good strategy when having to **deal with customers when you are having a bad day** in G20.

Memo 35

Note that thinking the customer is always right (in B4B) is one of the things talked about with customer focus. This is why it is placed under the attitude thing. Yet this same principle is said to be one of the worst aspects to customer focus (C0-1) in that customers may be off the mark. Note that thinking that the customer is always right leads one person to say that *going over entirely to the customer: becoming a slave to the popular* is a bad part to customer focus (*also in B4B*). Note that becoming a slave to the populous is a consequence of believing that the customer is always right (B4B) and the customer being off the mark (in C0-1).

I wonder what people really do mean by the customer is always right (provided that the customer knows what it is that we are here to do. If managers think the customers are always right, then we may end up doing things that we are legislatively not entitled to do.

Memo 36

not doing things right/ people not coming through the doors in D2E

For example"

(AG/W/225) [AG 5] and if we're not doing the right thing
(AG/W/225) [AG 5] people don't come through the front door.

Note that numbers coming through the door was first placed in egocentric under B4C as it is one of the elements in explaining this attitude type. Measurement was placed as a factor in D2AA in customer focus is talked about in that it is where the emphasis is. And now I find people not coming through the doors (in D2E) is one of the problems workers are experiencing.

Thus, customer focused is something that is just talked about is one perception of the walk. This walk is explained by an attitude things which is guiding the action. The attitude thing really is not the talk rather a phenomenon influencing the talk.

Hence, the walk is related to customer focus is talked about. Numbers coming through the doors is a problem in D2E and also an element of the attitude thing (in B4C) and in particular, the egocentric thing (which is a self focus).

Not doing things right, people not coming through the door is placed under problems. This is the walk. And this walk is explained by using the above paragraphs.

And note that this is all said in the instance that yes we are customer focused externally but not internally. It makes you question how could workers say that they are customer focused when they identify all these problems.

Memo 37

Having two things to do (B4C) includes the bums on seats thing (egocentric thing) as well as getting the information out. The bums on seats thing was also expressed as a measurement thing as something within customer focus is talked about (which is in says its talked about but not practiced).

Focusing on what they are doing/ seeing themselves just as security/ its their key focus, suggests that one thing is to focus on what your doing, but the key dimension

to that is to focus on what your doing keeping in mind that what your doing is to make the customer feel good.

Focusing on what your doing is what is said the talk of customer focus is about. People say it is also practiced. The point here is how much of the focusing on what you are doing is at the expense of the customer. I am security so therefore I will stop people climbing over things. People should know that they are not allowed to climb over things, or parents would stop their kids form climbing over things. Thus, it really comes down to the way you tell people to stop climbing over things. i.e. Telling people off without making them feel as though they have had an unpleasant experience.

This may also relate to knowing your job in D2A. But as I've found, this is only one part to the story. Knowing your job is also focusing on what your doing. But you need to have the attitude that focusing on what your doing is what the customer wants as in D1A and D1AA.

Customer focus is definitely an attitude - mindset. See the reasoning in D2A- knowing your job, its the key focus and D1A which is saying its not your job that your key focus is pleasing the customer

Memo 38

Helping or assisting customers receive a desired outcome/ its a matter of helping customers in line with what we can deal with and what the customers desired outcome is/ only going so far/ can't give customers things that they are not entitled to/ not compromising my relationship with others in A0 is made with a number of notes.

- 1: Its a type of balancing thing. Balancing what it is that we do with what the customer wants. Customer maybe asking for something which is a service we don't provide (i.e. being off the mark in C0-1). Note however this suggests a self focus in that what we do is limited to what we think we should do rather than doing what it is that the customer wants.
- 2: This may explain what is meant by "helping" as opposed to "servicing". Helping is a defined to what we can do while servicing means giving what the customer wants.

For example, helping is a Public service mentality rather what the customer wants is a service.

See also the comments you've type under D2 in the sub section about providing a service versus doing a job.

Memo 39

Another key point, remember this is what you felt really comfortable with at the time.

Note that possibly knowing what to do, knowing your job in D4 is possibly the same as service types in A1C. For example,

(FT/W/43) [FT/9] I work in the HR section so every day people have queries in regards to their leave - in A1C requires
(FT/W/43) [FT/9] and we always have to keep our records up-to-date - in D2A.

Therefore, the whole of D2A becomes a redundant item in terms of walk. The importance of the issue is that it help explains the comment in memo 38. That is, respondents view what they do through a "self interest lens", i.e. we help, assist in terms of what we are here to do. This is nicely explained by A0 - balancing between what we do and what the customer requires. As against a "customer interest lens" which means that people provide what it is the customer wants. The talk "providing the best possible service" in walk means "providing the best possible service to a certain point" Note the intervening issue of informing customers what we do, customers being off the mark in C0-1. Note however also that C0-1 may be considered as further evidence of the "servicing self interest" because customers are not their to gain knowledge about the acts and our procedures, rather they require a service.

Maybe customer focus is more about informing customer what we do, not about providing the best possible service (although not a dominant theme in the worker data. Its more a theme of what we should be doing more of).

You may wish to analysis A1C to see how much of the data is in fact a service and how much of it is task (which would them be more appropriately placed under D2)

Memo 40

G19 sources of frustration/ sources of stress relates to CO-1 customers being off the mark in that customers being off the mark lead to stress because we can not deliver what the customer expects. This impacts on A1D, provider is happy that they are providing an effective service/ doing the job in an enjoyable manner/ taking the stress out of the job, in that the A1D items are the talk of customer focus.

Alternatively, G19 and C0-1 may be perceived as intervening conditions that inhibit customer focus.

Memo 41

The walk data in the interview is really restricted to A6 - general assessment of our performance. Note you will need to include the practice items listed in the remaining categories. The rest of the data seems to be worker "talk" or espoused data. This is good stuff, but it is outside the research question. All this is good for is to help strengthen the talk data from the TMT. That's is, improve the trustworthiness of the categories generated from the TMT interviews.

Note that closely related to A6 is G16 A, B, and C and G17. Also all of the D 1 and 2 items. Make sure you look at this data when commenting on the walk (i.e. the rest of the phase 1 data is worker talk data

Note the D 1 to 2 data (and also the G16 data) help to explain the anecdotal evidence that "I don't mean to be so negative", "we all love working for this place but your questioning seems to focus on the negative"

So as I see it, there are two elements to customer focus - i) doing your job is one element and ii) doing what the customer require. I think most people believe that doing your job is an element of customer focus. This is what they believe that they do well. This element is what I term a self focus. The doing what the customer requires is what they are not doing and explains the "why I feel I'm being so negative comments". So they do perceive that they are customer focused. But the data suggests that they are doing their jobs well. The overwhelming number of statements in the D 1 to 2 series and G 16 and G 17 series really suggests that the talk is not the walk.

Further, the reasons for why they don't walk the talk is emerged in the data as well, particularly the D2 series.

Memo 42

D4 knowing our purpose is related to aspects of G16B factors which require, force us to be customer focused in terms that the customer focus part of the strategic plan forces, urges us to deliver what we say we deliver.

APPENDIX 6

THICK DESCRIPTIONS OF TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM CATEGORIES AND SUB CATEGORIES

Chapter five provided an overview of the emergent categories and sub categories derived from analysis of the Top Management Team data. The grounding of categories, sub categories, properties and dimensions from the data are detailed following.

Conventions used in reporting of findings

Conventions used in presenting categories, sub categories, properties and dimensions are as follows.

- Bold type indicates category names.
- Italic type indicates sub category, property, and dimension, names.
- Words/phrases in single quotes indicates theme titles.
- Words/phrases in 10 point type indicate direct quotes from the data.
- Words in [] indicate author additions.

Category 1 - Structure of customer focus

Structure of customer focus as a category is comprised of six sub categories. Each sub category is well represented throughout all data sets. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.1 details the sub categories and properties for the **structure of customer focus** category.

TABLE 6.1: Summary of Findings for the Structure of Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Servicing	Providing, selling a service
	Looking after customer needs
	Providing a worthwhile experience
	Fulfilling customer needs
Service types	Various
Standards and performance indicators	Various
	Government imposed standards
Processes/systems/methods	General
	Conservative way
	Bureaucratic way
	Autocratic way
	New way of responding/value adding Giving more than/enabling customers
End result/outcomes	Self
	Other
	Win-win
Assessment of performance	Positive
	Negative
	Aiming to improve/getting better

- *Servicing* sub category

The *servicing* sub category is comprised of four properties. Dimensions of these properties are wide ranging reflecting the diversity in meaning of *servicing* amongst respondents.

Properties and dimensions of the *servicing* sub category pertain to two themes. These themes relate to *servicing* either 'self interests' or 'others interests'. The *servicing* 'self interests' theme is generated from data grouped under the *providing, selling a service* property. No relationship is made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. *Servicing* in this sense takes on the meaning of doing a job or task. This property, on the whole, is not well supported in the data. However, it is important in context of *processes/systems/methods* to the extent that *providing, selling a service* holds currency with an 'old' theme of *processes/systems/methods*. See discussion on *processes/systems/methods* below.

Illustrative thought units for the *servicing* 'self interests' theme include:

We are being employed to provide a service // So as far as we're concerned, as far as I'm concerned, customer focus is to provide those services in the best possible means // we don't sell a product we sell a service.

The *servicing* 'others interests' theme is generated from data associating service delivery with customer expectations or customer needs. Customer expectations and needs are viewed as strongly related with service provision. *Servicing* in this sense takes on the meaning of doing a job or task in context of customer expectation or need. The 'others interests' theme includes the three properties, *looking after customer needs*, *providing a worthwhile experience* and *fulfilling customer needs*. These properties are well support by the data, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *servicing* 'others interests' theme include,

- for the *looking after customer needs* property:

If you are in the business of providing a service to somebody, it doesn't matter what that service is, anything. // but we are a customer responsible organisation // And we should be servicing those people as best we possible can // At the end of the day you are there to provide a service to that customer // to say your here to help the people // Looking after the needs of the customer.

- for the *providing a worthwhile experience* property:

And trying to enhance the quality of the experience that they have in Kings Park // To me we are here to make sure that the persons experiencing in Kings Park has been enjoyable and pleasurable // they always leave us feeling satisfied with what it is - its been a successful function, its been what we expected, you know, all agreed outcomes. And that is a successful experience I think in customer focus // come and enjoy Kings Park and you can get these different experiences.

- for the *fulfilling customer needs* property:

And it has to fulfill their needs // And that's really part of what we try to provide, we try to fulfill their needs // Which vaguely means, building your service so it meets the needs of the customer // that are about delivering things to the public // You must actually be delivering to them what they need // it's what your customer wants and being able to deliver that, that is what an outcome is and again that's where the focus is // its just the whole thing of considering the needs // what do those customers or those visitors, what do they require in the way of information.

The *servicing* 'others interests' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the 'others interests' theme across the three properties include:

I get the general sense that people in the best interest are trying to service the customer ultimately // and we've seen evidence of it just here in the escarpment in recent times // but by in large, they saw that their role in servicing the people that come through the doors was extremely important // So those externals in some ways, or be it a very narrow base, weren't necessary all that poorly looked after // that's sort of one of those things that we think about.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the 'others interests' theme across the three properties include:

In some cases you don't // As a result of that we are not clear, we don't, we at the moment haven't got a feel for how good that quality of experience is.

- *Service types* sub category

Service types, as a sub category, contains numerous properties which indicate the wide range of service provided by participating organisations. Service types dimensions range along a continuum from *performing a task, role* to a *value added experience*. In context of the *servicing* sub category, the dimensions of *service types* emerge as relating to the themes of *servicing*. In other words, the *service type* dimension *performing a task/role* emerges as strongly related to *servicing* in the sense of a 'self interests' theme. Similarly, the *service type* dimension *a value added experience* emerges as strongly related to *servicing* in the sense of a 'others interests' theme.

The indicative range of service types provided are illustrated in the following thought units.

We've also got the requirement to be the collector and the conservator of the states art collection // Corporate services is a service orientated function within the organisation // OK we cover the heritage of Western Australia // They rely on us to provide the expertise and advice for them to preserve the local heritage // Yeah, we have this scheme in which we assist shires you know, financing through the State government to buy fire appliances and that // provide some financial support for surveillance aircraft, heavy equipment, etc. // We have an information office // And we have security that move around // like provide housing for them // The only contact that we really have with them is through what's called Premiers correspondence, you know where they, I mean anybody writes in and sends a complaint to the Premier // who we have a responsibility to provide a fair trading environment to // writing a question for the Minister // that's a part of what the organisation is here for, is that policy advice // whether its a customer complaint or providing advice of whatever // Yeah, whereas I run the housing real estate directorate // you know answering telephones and all that.

- *Standards and performance indicators* sub category

Standards and performance indicators, as a sub category, contains numerous properties which underpin the wide range of standards applied by participating organisations. *Standards and performance indicators* vary depending upon the nature of the service, the type of client need and perceived performance standards. Dimensions vary from more technical, quantitative *standards and performance indicators* including *number of visitations, being timely and effective, and accessibility issues* to more social, qualitative *standards and performance indicators* including *clean toilets and barbecue facilities, safe trees and friendly, happy, confident staff*.

The diversity of *standards and performance indicators* are illustrated in the following thought units.

And the other aspect of this which is the contact stuff // and would have those things available, easily accessible // we've started to introduce the idea performance agreements between our internal clients // you can get it 24 hours a day seven days a week // of increasingly providing that service to the customer at the time they want it // To be able to give visitors really clean and secure areas // So I see clean toilets as the first priority // presentable safe picnic areas which means that the grass is green // And we actually, as part of our customer service, we will offer a 15 minute guarantee time // So if our Kimberley regional manager rings up one afternoon or one evening on a Sunday in June, we will guarantee 15 minutes turn around // I think number one friendly, happy, confident staff // Well certainly from my point of view, a full and patent, transparent accountability // Responsiveness // So that if there is a need demonstrated by our client group we respond to that // Our first objective is to provide a range of world class facilities and services for all visitors // I've got an experience very similar to that with them wanting to be the leading edge in financial reform // so where as if it had been six months ago they said you guys haven't taken us to the leading edge.

The *standards and performance indicators* sub category includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *standards and performance indicators* sub category include:

What was right I must say was the accountability process // That was good // we're open all weekend which is great.

Illustrative examples of explicit negative evaluations for the *standards and performance indicators* sub category include:

Because nothing was happening (laugh) // but I think that 10 to 5 midweek is dubious.

A further dimension to the *standards and performance indicators* sub category concerns thought units placed under the property of *government imposed standards*. A theme emerging in the data concerns the standards imposed by government in implementing the customer focus strategy as being *quick fix, Mickey mouse, low level things*. This theme is evident in all but one data set.

Illustrative thought units of this view include:

You got to have something that is measurable and as soon as you do that then you end up with something that is pretty low level and a bit Mickey Mouse // So the parameters of what they [PSMO] were doing was the negative thing // Much of what happened initially with the customer service charter focused on sort of quick fix things // now you know the turn around time in ministerials is sometimes totally unrealistic.

- *Processes/systems/methods* sub category

The *processes/systems/methods* sub category is comprised of six properties. This is the most supported sub category under the **structure of customer focus** category. The first property is termed *general*. The *general* property contains various dimensions of *processes/systems/methods* for the customer focus phenomenon. These *general* dimensions include *having an assumed priority level of customers, treating customers differently, reacting in any way in which there is a need and being very tactful with difficult customers*.

Illustrative thought units of the *general* property include:

Yes we do treat our internals differently to our externals // Um I think in all honesty we would have to say that they are treated differently, of course they are // Its that you know, the important part is being able to put a human face behind the organisation // I guess the other thing is just the personal level stuff which has got a bit of an emphasis about you know, treating people well // attending to their concerns, inviting feedback and all those kind of interactive things // as far as where're concerned customer focus is relating // because you work through, you have an assumed priority of customers // Is your question is there some need to, because it would seem to me that a client or a customer is a customer and that every customer deserves to be treated as a customer whether their internal or external // that in a sense your trying to meet the same ends but there is no doubt about it, if you have a choice, especially if parliament is sitting - who gets the best service, the ministers office gets the best service, always // We are there if you want us // to fast track it or whatever it might be // then you have to have a bureaucratic mechanism to allow that to be done // But I mean the relationship is such

with. certainly with the information officers and attendant, they know that they can call us. me or my staff down, and we will actually speak to the people // you need to be very tactful in dealing with them // but you do it in a way in which they don't feel in the slightest bit demeaned by the process // so that they don't loose face.

The *general* property also includes thought units which provide evidence suggesting two types of *processes/systems/methods*. This is illustrated by the following.

And that's the old bloody carrot and the stick isn't it // Its the catching the bees with honey rather than vinegar // we like the fact that their advisory to and not dictatorial to us.

The two types of *processes/systems/methods* are represented in data as differing themes. These themes are simply referred to as 'old' and 'new'. Dimensions of the *general* property are replicated across both the 'old' and 'new' themes.

The 'old' theme within the *processes/systems/methods* sub category includes the properties *conservative, bureaucratic, and autocratic*. These properties are well represented in all but one data set. *Conservative*, as a property, is supported in four of the data sets, *bureaucratic* in two, and *autocratic* in one.

'New' themes within the *processes/systems/methods* sub category include the properties *new ways of responding/value adding* and *giving more than/enabling customers*. The notion of a 'new' theme is particularly illustrated in the dimension *not at the superficial level of acknowledging the complaint* (which is a type of old way of responding) *but offering assistance* (which is a type of value added experience).

Properties for the 'new' theme are represented in all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'old' theme include,

- for the *conservative* property:

In a sense what we are trying to do is to sort of say well the traditional model has been // but the system that you were given was a conservative one // because you've been dealing with it that way for sixty years or a hundred years or whatever it might be // because its been there for fifty years and it will go on for another fifty // We've gone on for ages and ages and ages, nobody had ever said anything about it // there's the customer and there's the provider being us and there's the service // where as before there was the ability to deny // all we would have said is well we can't do it here // you [the customer] go away and do it // because you put hurdles in front, not deliberately // once upon a time we use to be checkpoints as service providers, we'd say you can do this you can't do that // and everyone said no you can't do that, you can't do that // what you can and can't do in the park // you must show that you need it before we

would give it to you // well you've got to need it to get past the tests // and therefore there may be rules and regulations and requirements or whatever

- for the *bureaucratic* property:

And so if we provided really fantastic services to those few customers we are neglecting our other customers // And one of the things that is often, the complaints often been thrown at this agency is that we provide 'middle class well-fare' // we think that we've done all we can for you, if you need something else you'll have to come back to us // So I said yeah fine, OK, we'll do it for this year, but next year I want it moved // its your responsibility to make sure your have got your license, you make sure you get the form in on time.

- for the *autocratic* property:

Its taking on an authoritarian approach from Governments sort of like from the Premier's office // so they are very autocratic in the way that they dictate what can be done // and so that's where they send things to get things done, and they want them done yesterday and they want them done this way // fix his rental property and fix it up or you've got to // so they have been given those parameters [being autocratic].

The 'old' theme includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the 'old' theme across the three properties include:

Whereas in the pass we have been locked in to how many transactions do we have to process per day // and all we do is concentrate on getting the process right // I mean, my job is to get the pink slips right X in the square box and pass it on to the next guy who puts an X in the box, the blue slip ends up in the bin, the green slip ends up out the door, and that's what they see as being their job, who cares what the pink, the blue and the green slips are for, nobody, if it was ever explained to the person he never knew, you know they obviously relate to customers, he never knew, that was his job. So that's what I do and I don't really care about anything else, I just do that // but I think organisations, pockets of organisations anyway, tend to perpetuate that thinking // and parts of this organisation I think have, until very recently anyway, perpetuated that kind of thinking // This use to be, I think the philosophy here // then if the orders are not enforced they come back and they hold there hands while they get the order enforced // that you would kind of go on and on and on // because if you have got a week to produce something that has to get back to the Premier with some feedback , you might ring 3 or 4 people because that's all you have got time to do. You don't have that, you can't really talk to agencies about that.

Illustrative thought units for the 'new' theme include:

- for the *new ways of responding value adding* property:

And you know new fandangled ideas // so that people actually get something that they can't normally get // it doesn't mean your degrading your standard, but your gonna have to put a new dimension on your output // add more to this experience that people are already having // or a value adding experience // and make the lazy bastard in the

bloody Bunbury office, if he wants that information, make him go to the information first and only then if he can't access it, then he comes to I // and not just at the superficial level of acknowledging the complaint and saying we've heard you and we're going to do something about it, but in fact that we do something about it and offer assistance // So in other words, the service has been put next to the customer // we produce a CD ROM and say okay there you go, now you've got the museum // We send the information either electronically or people can actually visit the museum, books, whatever, various items // Good, improved products. Good and improving products // So rather than having to ring up at another time in the future, you might deal with it // that doesn't mean to say that we don't help people, but you can't sort of hold there hand endlessly.

- for the *giving more than/enabling customers* property:

If you like they themselves take on the responsibility // which is enabling them to make decision // Which is, not only just getting what I ask for, but getting also what would in addition help me // but perhaps giving more than // because my attitude to them would be, well they only asked for this piece of paper, but maybe they would also like a copy of our publications // you actually kind of go out of your way if you like to provide service // where they put resources to actually get on top of it and get rid of these fires // One thing is what they are asking for and the other is to how they are going about it, in that deserving // but from my point of view, they might also deserve to know how to make those decisions for themselves // and know more about the specifics so that they would get some way to act for themselves // Then I have got customer focus from my point of view and how I would like to be treated // and I would like to get that kind of service when I ring up // if they come back to us we'll open up the file again and do something about it // in terms of phone calls sort of says you know, well can I get so and so to ring you back, not you know, he will be back in so and so, you know that there's a difference.

The 'new' theme includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the 'new' theme across the two properties include:

That's the Kimberly's, its being used in the Pilbara, its being used on the Nullabour Plane // We have developed with remote sensing the technology now using the NOHA satellite whereby the satellite scans the state at six in the morning and by ten in the morning we are providing information to pastoralists on the ground, through faxes or in fact even through our own satellite phone fax system // And we have loan collections which go out to schools that can't come in // So they might be doing a particular topic, they can get this and it becomes a class room display for a few weeks, they do their program and then they send it back // and at an open day we like to do behind the scenes tours with curators // Yeah, I suppose one that springs to mind is that Treasury requested help to do some job design work on a set of new positions in their restructure ... what we did was agree to put together a request for quotation, get it out to industry, evaluate the response, provide some recommendations to them, for them to go to contract on it // what we actually did was said, well we can't do it but here is what we can do and we did something for them.

- *End result/outcomes* sub category

End result/outcomes sub category relates to the *standards and performance indicators* sub category. This relationship is drawn on the basis of the similarity in dimensions across the two sub categories.

Three themes are identified in the *end result/outcomes* sub category, which are used as the property label headings. Properties pertain to either an *outcome/end result* for the organisation - the *self* property, customers - the *others* property, or for both customers and the organisation, the *win-win* property. The *self* property is supported in all but one data set, the *others* property a shared view in all data sets, with the *win-win* property well supported in all but one data set.

Dimensions to the properties of the *end result/outcomes* sub category are wide ranging reflecting the diversity in services provided by participating organisations. Dimensions for the *self* property vary from *providing services at minimal cost and having full visitation*, to *churning something out and looking for the perfect score sheet* as illustrated by the following thought units:

The cost has been minimal // OK there's some research papers been published and various other things but I think the key is visitation, of having full visitation you know // the proofs in the pudding in the people who walk through the door // and so we. I mean we just had to churn something another out // To be fair to this department, they are looking for a perfect score sheet at the end of every day // I feel as though, it helps me to achieve what I want to achieve at the same time.

The *self* property also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations.

Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *self* property include:

So I guess in a sense, for a small agency like ourselves, that probably represents a very good example // the continuity of the service is good.

Dimensions for the *others* property vary from *customer now demand for services and customers asking where the bloody hell is the satellite*, to *customers want to seek employment with us, customers thanking you on the way out and customers leaving with a smile* as illustrated by the following thought units:

Is the demand now by those pastoralists // I mean they will be on the phone to our regional office by 10.30 every morning saying where the hell is this bloody satellite // I would apply for a job with them, all those sorts of things // and it should be value for money // when they come to the gallery they are a winner // like if they walk out of here and they have really gained something // I guess its providing something that sends people away feeling satisfied // I feel its nice to see a customer smiling, you know

what I mean // and I guess you would have to have happy customers // If our toilets are not working or they are dirty, it will reflect very badly on us.

The *other* property also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *other* property include:

But strangely enough people visiting the museums are inclined to say when they are leaving I really enjoyed that // they go away and they say that was terrific // they have certainly sent letters to the gallery to say they have enjoyed their experience // We did it, at the end of the night two Board members came up and apologised and said this is fantastic // The Minister came over and said I'm glad I did this.

Dimensions for the *win-win* property vary from *everybody learning from it and customers bringing in elements we didn't know about*, to *customer focus is contagious* as illustrated by the following thought units:

And apparently, according to our people in the central region based in Northam, the shire clerk has been recently making overtures. I do want to see you, I do want some advice, I do want some help, my brigades do want some training // and they'll recommend us to their friends and family and things like that // They come back to do the programs because there good value // they know that the children will benefit from them and so forth // I think the fact that we all learned from it // and to make sure these people actually walk away from the organisation with, we hope the people walk away and learn something from this experience // and there were elements of the issue that we didn't know about that they brought to us.

The *win-win* property also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *win-win* property include:

So I think its a win-win situation, that's how I feel // customer service is contagious, I think that is probably the word for it // and then their friends and their family come and they enjoy it as well // I would recommend other people to them // We also find with repeat bookings.

- *Assessment of performance* sub category

The *assessment of performance* sub category pertains to data indicating respondents perceptions of overall performance to customer focus. Three properties to the sub category emerge. These properties pertain to *positive* and *negative* perceptions of performance, in addition to a third which groups perceptions pertaining to *aiming to improve/getting better*. The *positive* property is the most supported idea appearing in all but one data set. The *negative* property is supported in three of the six data sets.

The *aiming to improve/getting better* is the least supported property, represented in all but one data set.

Dimensions to the properties of this sub category are wide ranging, suggesting differences in perceptions on how well or poorly organisations are performing, in addition to perceptions on where organisations are trying to improve. Dimensions also include *perceived ratings* for performance. *Ratings* above the mean score are included in the *positive* property, *ratings* at the mean score are included in the *aiming to improve/getting better* property, and *ratings* below the mean score are included in the *negative* property.

In addition to the themes of *positive* and *negative*, explicit evaluations emerge from the data conveying positive and negative meanings. Observations of explicit positive and negative evaluations are indicated in the following summary for each property.

Illustrative thought units for the *positive* property include:

Oh no I would put it much higher than that. I'd say probably 6.5 // Given the resource base that we have I'd say out of 8 I'd probably give it a 7 // I'd rate that an 8 out of 10 // I think in terms of, if you wanted an 8 out of ten, or a number out of ten, I would probably say seven and rising // We are continuing to survive // if we weren't doing a good job there would have been one less fire organisation in the state I'm sure // And we were always customer focused anyway // so we are to a certain extent totally, we are totally there anyway okay // Sure, I would concur, our organisation is a service oriented organisation // Attendance's have gone up.

The *positive* property also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *positive* property include:

I think that most of our public face, our public programs area is definitely customer focused // But I think we're doing a pretty good job // When they were here doing their job as gallery attendants which is the public face of the organisation, their very customer focused // We have not, I mean we have improved // There are very few complaints that come through to us // we get 350,000 people plus through the doors, we get very few complaints maybe two or three a year/ Certainly at its leadership and certainly within them./ Well I think that there probably was always a very good spirit and culture of customer focus at different levels in the organisation // because most of us are good practitioners anyway, I'll back them against anyone in the private sector.

Illustrative thought units for the *negative* property include:

We're just below par // and I don't think we give a good service // No, no I wouldn't at the moment // Now a) its been poor from a budgeting point of view.

The *negative* property also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the *negative* property include:

Now there was an example where I believe that we were letting our customers down badly // and we certainly weren't helping them champion councilors on council and I think that was a very good example of poor customer service // we still have not advised that local government whether they have been successful in an application to buy a fire appliance // But we now know that it is not quite as good as we thought // the surveys have shown us that our service was not nearly as good as what we thought it was.

Illustrative thought units of *aiming to improve/getting better* property include:

We're probably about a four // Yeah, I'd agree with that cause I think we're sort of getting there but there still is a way to go // I mean, I wouldn't say that we are a perfect customer focused organisation and when you do your focus groups your going to find that // and we realise that there's some further improvement there // Yeah I think that's the thing that's probably really critical as that came out, quite apart from the revelation that others didn't see us as we saw ourselves // I hopefully say that I can answer that truthfully in three years and say, yeah we've reached it // So you know I think the critical thing with us probably is not where we are on the scale but which direction we are heading in on the scale // I mean you are never going to get to ten.

General comment on the structure of customer focus category

A picture is emerging of customer focus as pertaining to two differing approaches, termed 'new' and 'old'. The 'old' approach is referred to as either *conservative*, *bureaucratic* or *autocratic*, which is related to a view of *servicing* in terms of 'self interests'. The 'new' approach is referred to as either *value adding* or *giving more than*, which is related to a view of *servicing* in terms of 'others interests'.

Category 2 - Attitudes towards customers

Attitudes towards customers as a category is comprised of four sub categories. Each sub category is strongly represented across all data sets. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.2 details the sub categories and properties for the **attitudes towards customers** category.

TABLE 6.2: Summary of Findings for the Attitudes towards customers Category

Sub category	Property
Customer awareness	Don't have customers
	Thinking from the customer perspective
	Focusing on, understanding your customer
	Knowing who the customers are and what their needs are
Commitment to change	Carrying the thinking out/refocusing
	Starting from the top down
	Improving, modifying our work
	Tailoring/customising, to meet customer needs
Involvement	Involving customers/consultation
	Consequences of involving customers
Mindsets/attitudes	General - positive
	General - negative
	The attitude thing
	The bureaucratic thing
	The conservative element
	The scientific attitude

- *Customer awareness* sub category

The four properties of the *customer awareness* sub category pertain to two themes. These themes relate to types of attitudes; labeled 'closed attitude' and 'open attitude'.

The 'closed attitude' theme is generated from data under the *don't have customers* property. Dimensions to the property pertain to *not dealing with the public* or *only having a boss*. The theme of a 'closed attitude' is applied as the data suggests customer focus relates only to phenomena associated with external people. In comparison to the 'open attitude', the 'closed attitude' theme is not as well supported in the data, represented in only three of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'closed attitude' theme include:

Because we don't deal with Mr and Mrs general public / because we didn't have, you know our clients were not the public so we didn't have to / I never interface with the public / I mean, my, I have only got one and that's the boss (laugh) / in the sense that we as Kings Park Board have very few staff who would interact a lot with the public OK / so therefore our staff may not have a lot of contact with some of the public, some do certainly / Yeah, I mean I have nothing to do with the public / except in so far as I might get asked to handle a specific written complaint.

The 'open attitude' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the 'open attitude' theme across the three properties include:

What this program is doing for us, is that it is making realise that, hay we do have clients / we do focus on different demographic groups that we think that we can build / that we do cater to youth, in my opinion, extremely effectively / We've started to perceive, either me as a manger in some instances but I perceive my own staff as a client, we where not doing that before / We are much more focused on industry than we use to be / I think, in terms of where we've gone over the last couple of years as well, I mean the thing that has been quite significant, like I think a lot of the managers have moved to see industry groups as customers, traders as customers, all that sort of stuff, its all happened much more / Yeah but they also too have the public, now they also have public enquiries they do perceive those as clients.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'open attitude' theme across the three properties include:

Management of bush fires, of large bushfires, is another very good example where, for various reasons, I felt our organisation was not focused on its customers / Now there is no sort of consideration of the needs / There are some community groups that would be alienated by those sort of spaces / One of the things I'll probably just comment on in terms of when I first started in here, the broader visitor to the park is referred to as the unwashed / And it makes it in some ways a bit more difficult for people to realise that we are really dealing with customers because they don't see there colleagues in other parts of the organisation as being customers / So that's the thing, that people don't perceive their colleagues as being their customers, and yet they are / because I would say if you asked that question three years ago, people that we now call customers were not customers then / they think all customers and consumers out there and this group but they don't always think through exactly who their customers are / but the internals where the ones I don't reckon we really recognised.

- *Commitment to change* sub category

Commitment to change, as a sub category, contains three properties, with varying dimensions. The sub category pertains to a *commitment* to both *changing* and *improving*, existing servicing delivery practices. Related to the *commitment to change* sub category is the notion of *mindsets/attitudes*. *Mindsets/attitudes* emerges as a separate sub category - see below. *Commitment to change*, along with *mindsets/attitudes*, are both strongly supported across all data sets.

Underpinning the three properties are a diverse range of dimensions. These dimensions reflect different ideas on how agencies can *change* and *improve upon*, existing servicing delivery practices.

Carrying the thinking out/refocusing is the most robust of the three properties. Dimensions under the property are various, include *restructuring services, getting things clicking along, and measuring and improving*. The notion of *carrying the thinking out* is overtly illustrated in the dimensions *its more than saying OK lets do customer focus, you have to actually provide the infrastructures and having the mechanisms in place and making them accessible*. Illustrative thought units for this property include:

We've taken onboard / So then you start to bridge those gaps / So I think its carrying through that kind of thinking into every activity that we carry out / We need to get certain things really clicking along and doing very well / we will review and revisit that commitment to see if it's still relevant / but for instance if we have a customer complain we should have the proper way of dealing with that / and we try to bring into the organisation / So what we've done is we have changed all that structure / We've divided ourselves into industry areas so that they're dealing with, there is a whole group of people dealing with a particular industry, like real estate or motor vehicles / it's a matter of us working through the whole visitor focus strategy / The second phase is to start looking at putting what I would either call tourism products or recreation products and experiences in the marketplace / and saying I want it to change / Up until a year ago we still had three Rangers who saw themselves as Policeman, we don't need policeman, there's a police force for that / we've actually said no (to policeman), we've got Park Management whose primary responsibilities are about enjoyment and safety and enforcing by-laws to cater for 97% of the population / so you know we're really trying to make it work / is that, that process has been pretty effective in getting simple communication going about more aspects of customer service or customer focus / with the survey results each branch of the organisation was brought as a branch and taken through the results of the survey / if a customer wants it, we as service providers we're saying to them, well if you want it, it's OK / And in the course, in getting back to this measurement and improvement / OK this is great but I think there's more than that, not just saying okay lets do customer focus and things like that / There should be, you should have training programs through the education services, schools, curriculums things like that, your trained for sales personnel and various other things / There should be training courses in there which actually provide the infrastructures / and there is a mechanism in place in which that's got to be accessed and its got to be approved.

The property *carrying the thinking out/refocusing* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *carrying the thinking out/refocusing* property include:

But generally speaking they've all taken it onboard / they've actually raised to the occasion / come up with quite good initiatives ourselves / And we're very much managing that process at the moment / It wasn't just a pretty picture but actually helping / We've taken that from being hidden in a little corner of the park to being a 10 day major festival attracting over 35 thousand people / I think they have been a little bit more on the ball in that car park / Some departments took it on board as their reason for being / And its just been amazing how they've all come onboard / we've actually put a lot of effort into improving the quality of our telephone advice service/ and I think that was the most wonderful thing.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *carrying the thinking out/refocusing* property include:

But they where being, I was told, aggressive / Other departments I don't think would even probably to this day know too much about it.

The property *starting from the top down* is represented in only one data set. However, within this data set, the view is well represented. Dimensions of the property pertain principally to the concept that *if customer focus is to work, it has to come from the top*. Illustrative thought units for this property include:

Its gonna have to be demonstrated by every government department in their dealings towards other government departments / not just in our dealing towards Joe Rate Payer out there or Joe Tax Payer out there / (interrupting) So it starts from the top down / What I'm trying to emphasis, is okay you start from the top / I think what basically what we're saying is that its the old story that if we want customer focus to work, its gonna have to come from the top / It really does need to come from the top/ its supporting these things and saying look, if my parliamentarians haven't got a customer focus how do you expect the bloomin' rest of the government have a customer focus.

One explicit negative evaluation for the *starting from the top down* property is demonstrated in the data as follows.

Its a one way street.

The *improving, modifying our work* property is well supported across all but one of the six data sets. Dimensions of the property pertain range from *improving training courses* and *doing things better*, to *modified the way we've worked because people have chosen to complain* and *creating a friendly image*. Part of the process of *improvement, modifying our work* includes improving the *communication between ourselves and other service providers*.

Illustrative thought units for this property include:

Just because organisations are always on the lookout for continuous improvement opportunities / A truly customer focused organisation would be one in which it was always looking for the potential to do things better / We also spent quite a lot of resources on producing better information so that when they ring up or whatever, we've actually have got more, you know user friendly information / we've always done it this way, but perhaps there is a better way of doing it / so that the staff were better informed to handle the inquiries from customers / so we keep on improving our performance and our productivity / we're trying to find ways of stopping things that really don't add value / Its having things set up to make that easy for them though. Like you know who to contact and you get straight through to the person / Oh, we've done a lot of things to make sure that doesn't happen / Well that's one example, but there's other examples where we've actually modified the way we've worked because people have chosen to complain and / in fact the shop operations now are much more friendly, we're trying to

create an image / be our communication between the restaurants and ourselves, we need talk it through, we have to improve it

The property *improving, modifying our work* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *improving, modifying our work* property include:

And this organisation, at least at the management level, its certainly like that / and then that has been picked up this year / and to their credit at this stage, people are actually doing something with the information that came out of that / We've not tried to create an ambience in our foyer that's an elite ambience, far from it / and the important thing you know is that our people do have the focus, that they do want to be improving.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the *improving, modifying our work* property include:

There should have been processes in there for someone to come in and fix it.

The property *tailoring/customising, to meet customer needs* is minimally supported, represented across three of the six data sets. Dimensions of the property pertain to a *commitment to change* in the sense that organisations are *tailoring/customising* what they do to meet the needs of customers.

Illustrative thought units for the *tailoring/customising* property include:

And to work our what product mix and what experiences do we put for those kinds of classifications of visitors // and start tailoring to them [customers] // its an issue of customising what you deliver to meet the clients needs // like hit the target out there // We are conscious of client groups // We've got full on education programs that are tailored to different communities to senior citizens etc. // What I'm saying to you I think is that this is not ad hoc.

- *Involvement* sub category

Involvement, as a sub category, is well represented across four of the six data sets. Although termed a sub category, *involvement* represents a theme in its own right. Properties of the sub category pertain to *consultation* and *customer involvement*, in addition to the notion that involvement leads to benefits, or in other words, *consequences of involving customers*.

Underpinning the two properties are a diverse range of dimensions. These dimensions support the notion that *involvement* leads to beneficial consequences.

Dimensions of the property *involving customers/consultation* include responses pertaining to *relationships, commitment* and *communication*. Illustrative thought units for this property include:

I mean you've got to be (consulting), because it wont work if you don't / working out how together you can provide the best service / we went to everyone of our regional advisory committees in about a three month period / They you know, if they want to come onboard they will / I mean for instances, we set an objective, simply through an agreed process by all the players / and the inter-relationships between all the players is allowing continual improvements / We wrote it (vision and mission) together, we argued and bitched and winged and complained / So the councils are really in a situation of strength if you like in being able to relay what the thinking is out there to the community / we were getting into some really good value qualitative work with people / now that doesn't mean that that's not important, but it should come from our own customers in terms that they are the important things about the tasks they are asking for / I think in the approach to the legislative reviews and those sorts of things, like that's done with groups of people, with reference groups / where you have got industry and consumers, as well as government bodies on it / would share with the members of that committee all elements of the budget which they have got for training in that region for that financial year.

The *involving customers/consultation* property also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *involving customers/consultation* property include:

In a very, very good consultation process which everyone participated in / I think we got that 16 weeks down to seven weeks / We better than halved the time frame / You don't have to argue that case any more about talking to anybody. I think that's a really solid thing.

Although a less emergent property, dimensions of *consequences of involving customers* conveys *involvement* in a positive sense. Illustrative thought units for this property include:

We benefited enormously, in the tender process / I think when we went to tender, we ended up saving about 6,000 dollars, about five percent per appliance which is a lot of money / But more to the point, those managing the local government funds knew in advance / Other councilors who were negative became neutral / some who were neutral became positive.

- *Mindsets/attitudes* sub category

The *mindsets/attitudes* sub category is strongly supported across the six data sets. It is comprised of six properties. The first two of these are labeled *general - positive* and *general - negative*. Both properties contain varying dimensions of *mindsets/attitudes*. The two properties are distinguished from one another on the

basis that the dimensions pertain to either positive or negative evaluations of *mindsets/attitudes*.

Illustrative thought units of the *general - positive* property include:

And everybody believes that the customer is in fact the reason why we are here / Those standards flow through to the organisation in a more organic way as opposed to just bleating on every time that we've got a policy / But if customer focus is organic, as you indeed say it is, well then it filters through to every person of the gallery / Customer focus is an ideology, a belief system / and that they behave in a way that's commensurate with that belief / So that there is a flow on about how staff will treat the visitor / if you can do that, then that all comes out in the way they treat their visitor / Its just so much easier if your staff are happy then obviously they are in a good position to make the customer happy / If you've got disgruntled staff then trying to ask them to put themselves out to make the customer happy it just like doesn't match / Yeah, its a mindset / Well what I think its done is to help management in its task of focusing the staff on the fact that the customer is the reason why we are here / but its because I'm biased, I believe in it myself / I mean there is a feel of the gallery that that this thing is quite real / and they should respond to that training in the way that lives the training / and I believe in what the public sector is trying do / and I'm proud to work within that system / Yeah you've got to live it yourself / Its given a sense of discipline to that ideology that was definitely not there previously / Throughout the organisation where people understand and understand at a deep level.

The *general - positive* property also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations.

I don't get care if I get time in leau, I'm not doing it / but there are just a few who basically don't give a damm about the Museum or where its going or what its purpose is / Its a job and I suppose that's the difference / Yeah would have, and we don't exactly have that at the moment completely as far as our info. offices go.

Illustrative thought units of the *general - negative* property include:

And that's particularly from the sort of older kind of attitudes that well we've gotta help the consumers you know / Its people who see a job as a job rather than as something that actually is part of their lives / But in the past, you walked into a government department and you were, like I said, you were made to feel as though you were the guilty party and yet you are the customer / and, so like the things I said, you go into these organisations and you ask for something which is yours by right and you have to actually have to fight to get for whatever it might be and fight very hard / so this business that I introduces which is very valid of going in there and basically having to demand the service or whatever it is / that they don't give a stuff / otherwise you don't get it because the public servants on the other side of the counter you know, for whatever reason, they don't like giving it to you on that particular day / I mean that's what's we're judging them on / So that's what I do and I don't really care about anything else, I just do that / who cares what the pink, the blue and the green slips are for, nobody, if it was ever explained to the person, he never knew / I would say didn't have an orientation towards those people coming into the Park primarily.

The *general - positive* and *general - negative* properties are more appropriately conceived in terms of themes. In other words, the data in both *general* properties pertain to either 'positive' or 'negative' types of *mindsets/attitudes*. Dimensions of the remaining four properties align with the notion of the *general* properties as themes.

The *attitude thing* property is related with the 'positive' theme, while *the bureaucratic thing*, *the conservative element* and *the scientific attitude* are related with the 'negative' theme. The notion of *mindsets/attitudes* in terms of *bureaucratic and conservative* align with responses grouped under the same labels under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category under category 1 **structure of customer focus**. Noting the additional concept of *autocratic* in the *processes/systems/methods* sub category and *scientific* in *mindsets/attitudes*.

Illustrative thought units of the 'positive' theme for *the attitude thing* property include:

Its that attitude thing / its that kind of thinking. / So, we stopped, once upon a time we use to be checkpoints as service providers / We are much more interested in, attuned and take care over, I think our industry customers, particularly institutes and associations and other industry people as well / you know that there's a difference, its that kind of thinking, you actually kind of go out of your way if you like to provide service. Its that attitude thing / If you want it in a nut shell I suppose it is an organisation that, in terms of phone calls, sort of says well can I get so and so to ring you back, not you know, he will be back in so and so / I suppose that attitude thing that its about remembering what we are here for / There was never a difficulty with convincing staff that they need to be oriented towards customers. What they did need was focusing / They see that its everyone's responsibility in the Museum to make sure that the visitor to the museum has a pleasurable experience / you actually kind of go out of your way if you like to provide service / So their taking themselves out of what it was they were intending to do / And basically its the old adage the customer is always right even when they're wrong.

The 'positive' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the 'positive' theme include:

And I think that we are doing better in terms of our attitude to people who want licences and those sorts of things / I think there's been a lot of, I think the attitudinal stuff in regard to that, I think is pretty good / So that if you are on your way up to the tea room and you are walking through the marine gallery and someone's there and you can make their visit more pleasurable, well you do it / and that's the sort of thing that I find to be most gratifying.

Illustrative thought units of the 'negative' theme include,

- for *the bureaucratic thing* property:

The bureaucracy was a cause / That was totally organisation, bureaucratic / And that's particularly from the sort of older kind of attitudes / they would have seen that they just didn't have the time or the expertise or the people to put it into place / And it bottlenecked at the time I speak of / Well it was an inflexibility in terms of being able to free up the flow of logs (laugh) down the stream / The guidelines were inflexible / the time frames were inflexible / the approval processes were unduly long / And unfortunately at that time, I think it's fair to say there was not as strong an emphasis on clearing the congestion of the logs / it comes back to this business of the minister as a customer, the further you get down the organisation you will find, why do you have to worry about that for, I mean, let the minister wait, they are not that important.

- for *the conservative element* property:

And in a conservative organisation that's the view / the block is that it is a conservative organisation / we've still got these 60 guys still doing the same thing / That's pretty significant actually because that gets back to the regulations and all that sort of stuff as to whether, do you want or do you need / you can't do it, no value adding - must still do it / and there is no value adding anymore / and technology has gone ahead of you, what's the point of doing that anymore / but when you've got certain constriction on how you perform because of a very strong audit act / So it's, we can't respond as quickly as what we otherwise may because there's got to be a regulator and a legislative change / I think that we still have people who would think that those Acts, that legislation is imitable, that there is no way that you can do anything that is outside the kind of four dots / this produces something that they don't want at all / and you are definitely dealing with a conservative element that are reluctant to change / that doesn't change very rapidly / So you could be investing a lot of resource or a significant amount of resource just to try to cover your back and that would be stupid.

- for *the scientific attitude* property:

So you've got a large pool of staff but mostly the whole things driven by scientists / You've got a pool of scientists there and scientists background / that I think they, you know perhaps aren't as focused as suppose we would really like it to be in the long term / That's it, like I said earlier on, there was one guy sitting there saying I don't know what you guys are talking about it's just going over their heads / and he's been here for 25 years or so / A lot of them seem to feel that it didn't really relate to them / They thought it was just a waste of time / they didn't want not to do it but it's just they didn't see it as being necessarily their responsibility to do it / They're not management orientated, they're research orientated / but they're not really interested in that / is all egocentric you see / So there are economies of interest in the organisation where they're saying now hang on now, there's nothing in it for me so forget it.

General comment on attitudes towards customers category

Customer focus emerges as pertaining to two types of *mindsets/attitudes*, labeled 'positive' and 'negative'. The themes of 'positive' and 'negative' *mindsets/attitudes* emerge as related to the themes of 'close attitude' and 'open attitude' in terms of *customer awareness*. Closely related to *mindsets/attitudes* is the notion of *commitment to change*. Customer focus emerges as pertaining to a 'positive' *mindset/attitude* and an 'open attitude' of *customer awareness*, both of which in turn are associated with a *commitment to change*. Emerging to a lesser extent is the notion of *involvement* which, as indicated by the data, is also an element associated with **attitudes towards customers**.

Category 3 - Customer understanding of ourselves as providers

Customer understanding of ourselves as providers as a category is comprised of three sub categories. Each sub categories is defined by a number of properties. Table 6.3 details the sub categories and properties for the **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

TABLE 6.3: Summary of Findings for the Customer Understanding of Ourselves as Providers Category

Sub category	Property
Customer awareness	Perceptions/perspectives/expectations/understanding
	Knowing what we do Seeing things happening
	Not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations
Involvement	Informing, advising what we do
	Not servicing/backlash if you don't do it right
	Consequences of explaining
Relationships	General
	Word of mouth
	Receiving bloody good complaints

Overall, the category is moderately supported across the data. *Customer awareness* is represented across all data sets, with *involvement* and *relationships* represented only across two data sets. Although represented in two data sets, *involvement* and *relationships* are both well supported, and thus emerge as important.

- *Customer awareness* sub category

Customer awareness, as in the sub category of the same name under category 2 **attitudes towards customers**, pertains to responses concerning attitudes, knowledge and understanding. It differs from the *customer awareness* sub category under category 2 in that the responses pertain to customer attitudes, knowledge and understanding. In other words, *customer awareness* as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to respondent perceptions of customer (as opposed to self) attitudes, knowledge and understanding.

Four properties for the *customer awareness* sub category emerge. The three properties, *perceptions/perspectives/expectations/understanding*, *knowing what we do*, and *seeing things happening* are comprised of dimensions grounding the notion of *customer awareness* as a factor influencing customer focus. Response convey customers in a positive sense.

Illustrative thought units for the *perceptions/perspectives/expectations/understanding* property include:

Like art, its all tried up with perceptions // there was from a state wide community perspective. an environmental perspective // So it doesn't take somebody in public sector management long to sort of realise well shit you know, their deserting the sinking ship in that organisation // are that museums are dead and its an old image, its full of stuffed things and nothing every happens // One of the other indicators I think John is how do your worst critics see you // at the end of the day the community I suppose have a right to expect government to deliver // and hopefully they understand what you're trying to achieve // they understand the steps, they understand their rights better // but once they understand why its not core to what you do.

A key dimension of the *knowing what we do* property are responses pertaining to *customer focus charters*. *Customer focus charters* are viewed as a mechanism to facilitate *customer awareness* as illustrated in the following thought units:

And you know in our first customer service charter // And when we did the customer focus charter // and we've got our customer service commitments // I think, and this came out in the work that we did when we were developing our charter, that's it is an organisation that tells people what it can and also what it cant do for people // every branch had the manager and a representative, so it was developed by the whole council. It was actually developed by the whole organisation // Oh it was early days but then I think we were one of the first agencies which managed to get one [customer service charter] out and running // So we put these brochures together // There's big signage boards behind saying what's on and where // and you tell the customers that's what you're trying to do // but that they understand that this is new information or a new process // that there's things that are helping you to enjoy yourself here with for whatever reason // We have gone out and marketed ourselves with new products for the

visitor to come and enjoy // Well probably the thing would be that you promote the organisation // and the way we market our exhibitions is particularly targeted.

The *knowing what we do* property also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *knowing what we do* property include:

And certainly there's been signage improvements in the gallery and that whole area // That started last year with, what was it called, the Australia Day Concert with Wendy Matthews, and we got 7 thousand people to that // I mean we're fortunate in that we've had some good results run the intersector magazine.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *knowing what we do* property include:

I think our signage is appalling, our sort of way of letting people know that we are here is appalling, how people find us on the telephone and all those sorts of things // I think there is room for improvement in that sort of area and I don't think we always give that sort of attention // I ran a Fun for the Young Day over spring. I didn't advertise it very much // This group had never had any public profile.

Illustrative thought units for the *seeing things happening* property include:

And yet for the visitor to actually see some of this that happened // Now they might at last be saying well shit that mob have got their bloody act together // to make sure that if you come to Kings Park here on the weekend you can walk away and think, you may not have met any staff, but you can actually say people who are running Kings Park seem to have it together.

The *seeing things happening* property also includes one thought unit conveying an explicit negative evaluation as follows:

Everyone gets lost here, and they get very frustrated.

Not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations, is also a property pertaining to *customer awareness*, however in this instance a negative theme emerges. The issue of *not knowing what we do-not interested incorrect expectations* portrays customers in a negative light. Dimensions for this property imply that respondents view customers as carrying unrealistic demands and expectations of themselves as service providers. This property includes perceptions suggesting customers as the cause for continuing cumbersome organisational systems.

Illustrative thought units for the *not knowing what we do/not interested/incorrect expectations* property include:

Yeah, but the fact is if they are on the wrong tact // and which so many people don't even know about /so the people, a lot of people didn't even know the Botanic Garden existed // A lot of problems occur when people have expectations that the organisation simply isn't set up to dealt with or can't do or whatever // so that creates kind of, you know, feelings of that your not getting your money worth or whatever when that's not what your there to do // but we where the bad guys automatically // and so they all would have said was well nothing you do is right // and they haven't looked at us for three or four years // I guess its fair to say most customers don't really care very much at what level services are delivered to them // The community can't really care // Well the clients got to able to define what it wants and were going through a significant wrestling period on that, because a lot of them don't // I mean we get all sorts of queries form people who want us to do something but, legislatively we're not in a position to do that // I mean, we for example for a long, long time we have been saying to people in certain areas of industry, if you've got a complaint under \$100 we wont want a phone call, we're not going to do a whole, huge investigation work because it just doesn't warrant it // that's [not having a definition of what they want] where a little bit of the anguish comes in // but they had not come to us with it // And all of a sudden the hair went up on the back of the neck // you end up putting in a cumbersome just to try to cover your back and that would be stupid.

Overall, the *customer awareness* sub category is well supported, represented across all data sets. In terms of themes, *customers awareness* in a positive sense is substantially more represented than it is in a negative sense.

- *Involvement* sub category

Involvement, as in the sub category of the same name under category 2 **attitudes towards customers** category, pertains to responses concerning consultation and communication. It differs from the *involvement* sub category under category 2 in that responses pertain to consultation and communication with customers as opposed to internal organisational consultation and communication systems. In other words, *involvement* as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to systems and methods of consultation and communication with customers.

The property *informing/advising what we do* pertains to responses concerned with how involvement with customers is achieved.

Illustrative thought units for the *informing/advising what we do* property include:

Basically explaining to them who we are, what we do and what kind of services we provide // and say to them these are the things that we can do for you and unfortunately there are some that we are not going to be able to do for you // I know I can't get it

from you I can get it elsewhere // but this other range of services I haven't been using. I am now using // what I do think is that people now know and agree with the direction.

The other two properties, *not servicing/backlash if you don't do it right* and *consequences of explaining* appear to pertain to two different themes. The *not servicing/backlash if you don't do it right* property implies 'negative' consequences in failing to *involve* customers, while the *consequences of explaining* property implies 'positive' consequences in involving customers. Accordingly, the notions of 'negative' and 'positive' are conceived as themes pertaining to customer *involvement*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include:

They looked to either other services or they looked within, and the circumstance developed in which we were not central to their activity // because we did not have them as our central focus and they just no longer saw us as relevant // because they didn't see us anymore as the major service provider // firstly they've got the option to go elsewhere // as a result they simply looked elsewhere // so we are not doing the right thing by the state if we allow that to happen // so people vote with their feet, their applying for jobs elsewhere // that you get when your customers are not happy // because your forever putting out fires // We always will be putting out fires because that is the nature of the agency // A lot of our enquiry is of a nature that you know there is a considerable backlash if you don't do it pretty well right // and they were looking for negatives.

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include:

We know what you are, we know what we should be expecting from you // and therefore to have a better understanding about our capacity to deliver // which is getting back to what I was talking about, them understanding why and how you do things and they demonstrating their needs // I mean, our key customers up there are over the moon about what our two people do // you've got shires like Carnarvon and Meekatharra might say well this is fantastic, thanks very much // and we are very much in demand // now we want your help.

- *Relationships* sub category

Relationships, as a sub category, is comprised of properties underpinning actions which enhance **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The *general* property implies a positive evaluation which is concerned with the notion of *customers seeing themselves as part of our organisation*.

Illustrative thought units for the *general* property include:

But that's the relationship // I mean they don't, I mean in the time I've been here I've never ever heard a chief or a brigade member or a captain say to us we're not part of

your organisation // You know they very much see themselves as bushfire board brigades.

The remaining two properties for the *relationships* sub category pertain to phenomena associated with **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. Such phenomena are *word of mouth* actions and *receiving bloody good complaints*. These properties imply a positive evaluation as demonstrated in the following illustrative thought units.

Word of mouth is critical with some of our strategies // Word quickly gets out to the customer // I mean its like you know if you have a positive experience you might go out and tell five people, if you have a negative experience you'll go out and tell 50, you know what I mean // it can work for us or against us, if people don't like the exhibition you can kill it // That was a bloody good complaint // It was a good, great complaint // you know we obviously didn't take into account the summer, the sun shifting during the summer // and we are very gratefully for you pointing this out to us // That's critical to what we do.

General comment on customer understanding of ourselves as providers category

Emerging from the data is the picture of customer focus as pertaining to **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. **Customer understanding** appears to pertain to three key phenomena, namely *customer awareness*, *involvement*, and *relationships*. Of the three, *customer awareness* emerges as the most important factor. A 'negative' theme emerges from not *involving* customers, while a 'positive' theme is associated with *customer involvement*.

Category 4 - Our understanding of ourselves as providers

Our understanding of ourselves as providers as a category is comprised of three sub categories. Each sub category is strongly represented throughout all data sets. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.4 details the sub categories and properties for the **our understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

TABLE 6.4: Summary of Findings for the Our Understanding of Ourselves as Providers Category

Sub category	Property
Purpose and role	Knowing what to do/the fundamentals
	Knowing our purpose
	Exist to do something core
	Past view/old role/the classic
Processes/systems/ methods	Customer focus view/new role
	Broader picture
	Ideal world
	Meeting our vision in a particular way
	Looking at what we do
	Formal customer service policy/operational instructions
	Getting the whole organisation working together and helping
	Risk management approach
	Balancing service delivery with customer expectations/compromise between the standard and delivering to a want
	Making decisions/strategic decisions
	Challenging the rules
	Things going wrong/not being focused on customers
Critical issues/problems/gray areas	
Restrictions/things that niggle me	
Thinking something is not right but not knowing how to do it	
Change	Opportunities/capitalising on things
	Competitors
	Customers having the ability to go elsewhere
	Starting to turn the ship/the big turn around
	Changing the culture/mindsets
	Precursors for change/acting as the catalyst
	Changing customer perceptions

- *Purpose and role* sub category

The *purpose and role* sub category is comprised of seven properties. The properties emerge as pertaining to three themes, termed 'general', 'old' and 'new'.

The 'general' theme is generated from data grouped under the properties *knowing what to do/the fundamentals*, *knowing our purpose* and *exist to do something core*. The three properties are related in the sense that the various dimensions grouped

under each of them pertain to what respondents perceive as the organisations *purpose and role*.

Illustrative thought units of the 'general' theme include,

- for the *knowing what to do/the fundamentals* property:

They are some of the fundamentals as I would see it / and its a key fundamental of this organisation as it is for any organisation. / and we're there to underwrite, underpin the service / written into the operational plans that people produce each year now / Yeah but also in our strategic plan, customer focus is one of the four major areas in our strategic plan / to give you an example, we've got program statements, we've got mission statements, we've got objectives, we've got everything in place.

- for the *knowing our purpose* property:

I mean we are a customer driven organisation to a large degree / Yes because ultimately what you're doing has to have a purpose in the context of the state government / we are funded by the state government, we're funded to do something, what we are funded to do is to deliver our charter / And customer focus is a way of focusing people on that charter deliverable / Trying to anticipate customer services requirements / Well they would, what's the word when you try, anticipate the types of things that I might need from that organisation / So in executive government they understand what they have to do and part of that means not taking risks / And a lot of the visitors that we get in you basically trying to keep them away from the premier / so in a sense we are going in the same direction as to what the Minister wants / I'm here for a reason / Oh I think it is really just putting the emphasis where it ought to be / Well take the word focus, I think it just helps to keep you focused about, oh hang on, what's your purpose / our purpose is to do certain things / and that they are responsible for ensuring those standards are there / So if your purpose is clear, then obviously everything around that stays connected with that purpose / We are not here to perform administrative functions for their own sake.

- for the *exist to do something core* property:

The reasons why they exist is to do something core // We believe our vision in fact does have a state wide perspective to it / And that's why we're here / So I mean as far as I'm concerned customer focus is our reason for being here / OK well I guess it means we should be looking at the fact that its not just a job, that we are here for a reason / So I guess from my point of view John, I would simple say that the customer focus is gotta be absolutely central to what a service agency is doing / So that to me is the major benefit of clear customer focus is surviving / and of course if we do not have a high customer focus we will become irrelevant to our customers / I think that the public service has just evolved over such a long period of time that often people thought that things existed just because they existed.

The 'general' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the 'general' theme include:

Yeah, basically, they [staff] see it as part of their job / that it is a role that they need to take on / It may not be their normal role but its one that they need to / we got to actually document what we think and what we are going to do, so there is / and that was one of the first strategies we implemented / that was one of our main strategies for this year / and we are working on them now / I tend to be a lot more focused in what my objectives are and what I am there for / I mean I truly, and again you are talking to individuals here, I truly believe we are here to service the customer.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'general' theme include:

And that's where I think we were in danger of simply disappearing off the hemisphere / The short answer to me is no it doesn't / Now in fact, we did not find ourselves in the position of being able to grab hold of a portfolio based vision.

The 'old' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions of the old *purpose and role* of organisations. This data is grouped under the property *past view/old role/the classic*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'old' theme include:

Now a lot of people tend to think, for in the past I guess in a lot of instances, you tend to see the customer as we tend to service them / And this is what the point that everyone is making, in government, most people don't see themselves as being a service provider / they think they are there because they have been employed to do something and they don't have that customer focus / If you comply with these sets of regulations, instructions or whatever, you have done your job / and if the auditor comes in and gives you a tick at the end of the year no one will quarrel with you / You know I think in the past, everything was around needs, somebody made a distinction that you needed it therefore you can have it / not really being too concerned about who our visitors were / Now we could well deliver information here that was totally irrelevant and totally uninteresting to the people of Western Australia / In the past scientists researched whatever their area of special interest was or expertise or whatever / Um well I think it goes back to what I was saying, for so long their focus had been research.

The 'old' theme property also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'old' theme include:

One of my worst fears is that we are specialising in the marketplace and catering for people who want a botanic experience / we had three that focused on law beakers and law enforcement for about a 3% of the market.

The 'new' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions of the new *purpose and role* of organisations. Properties pertaining to the 'new' theme are *customer focus view/new role, broader picture and ideal world*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'new' them include,

- for the *customer focus view/new role* property:

Its a new ball game / and that's one of the directions that we are moving in at the moment / This is a new way of doing it / Its increasing the information, better people, giving them [customers] more choice / Being accountable to tax payers for tax payers money / That output is for the people of Western Australia / At the grass roots level it would be patchier I think but still most of our staff would understand that we're an organisation that's in the entertainment industry in a sense / and were here to entertain people coming through the doors / But by and large our people respond I think well to the understanding that they are here to service the customers / Its developing something that people want and that they actually benefit from it / I guess to me it shifts the emphasis from the process to outcomes / I guess the thing that I would be looking for is people being more innovative in a customer focused organisation / that everyone is a customer of everyone else / but the collection in itself has no useful purpose unless it is accessible to the people who pay for it, the people of WA.

- for the *customer focus broader picture* property:

To have that broader view as well. / It's just that broader picture of dissemination of information / but you have to look at the broader picture / Now the move is to take that, they still do that but to expand that dissemination of knowledge through into popular publications / So its not that we are not also looking after, well the idea is to trying to look after all of the consumers not just the ones that turn up / look you guys [country staff] lift your game, that way we see benefit for all consumers not just the people who might attend.

- for the *customer focus ideal world* property:

In a perfect world / in a perfect world that's what you'd have / I may not have volunteer information officers / You'd have professionals / People who had been trained in customer service and probably a strong public relations focus / we would probably have the resources.

- *Processes/systems/methods* sub category

Processes/systems/methods, as in the sub category of the same name in the **structure of customer focus** category, pertains to responses associated with performing customer focus. It differs from the *processes/systems/methods* sub category in the **structure of customer focus** category in that the responses pertain to performing customer focus from a self perspective. In other words, *processes/systems/methods* as a sub category of **our understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to general perceptions of how customer focus is being achieved.

Process/systems/methods relates to *purpose and role* sub category in that a number of the former sub category's properties appear to pertain to the 'new' theme of the latter

sub category. Although related, the two are kept separate in that properties of the *purpose and role* sub category pertain to responses of what it means for organisations to be customer focused, as opposed to perceptions of how customer focused is being achieved.

Fifteen properties for the *processes/systems/methods* sub category emerged. As a whole, the sub category is strongly supported and represented across all data sets. Individually, the properties are supported to varying degrees. The properties relate to five themes in performing customer focus, termed 'general', 'new', 'barriers', 'opportunities' and 'threats'.

The 'general' theme is generated from data grouped under the property *meeting our vision in a particular way*. This property individually is not well supported in the data, represented in only one data set. It is important however, in that it links responses grouped under the *purpose and role* sub category to processual elements of customer focus. *Meeting our vision in a particular way* implies a link between *knowing your purpose and role* and *processes/systems methods*, and accordingly, is framed in terms of a 'general' theme. This is overtly illustrated in the dimension, *linking customer focus back to our vision*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'general' theme for the *meeting our vision in a particular way* include:

To enable us to be able to say well we are trying to meet our vision in this particular way / not only of a good customer service but also linking back to our vision.

The 'new' theme is generated from data grouped under seven properties, namely *looking at what we do, formal customer service policy/operational instructions, getting the whole organisation working together and helping, risk management approach, balancing service delivery with customer expectations/compromise between the standard and delivering to a want, making decisions/strategic decisions and challenging the rules*.

The 'new' theme is both strongly supported and strongly represented across all data sets. The notion of 'new' comes from the data which suggests **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is related to *processes/systems and methods* which are performed as a consequence of being customer focused. This is overtly illustrated in the properties *getting the whole organisation working together and helping* and *challenging the rules*. Dimensions of this strongly supported theme are various

reflecting the diversity of *processes/systems and methods* employed across the six participating agencies.

Of the seven properties for the 'new' theme, *looking at what we do* is the most robust. This property appears to be strongly held by all participating agencies. Dimensions of *looking at what we do* are various ranging from *thinking about what we do to training*. The least supported property is *balancing service delivery with customer expectations/compromise between the standard and delivering to a want*. This property is weakly supported, represented in one of the six data sets. It is included as a property as the concept pertains to a *process/system/method* of being customer focused and is sufficiently unique to warrant its separate categorisation.

Illustrative thought units for the 'new' theme include,

- for the *looking at what we do* property:

So all I'm saying is we are really looking at what we do / and then it comes back again to what we were talking about earlier we forever looking at the way we are doing it / because there was a lot to be gained by looking at what was going on in organisations in terms of customer service / Its like this bit of paper that you throw out the door, its like why did you fill in that bit of paper out in the first place / asking questions about how well we're doing it and whether its going to meet things / So we also need to think about and work out how we in fact meet the needs of the less articulate, you know, non English speaking and all those sorts of things / The people who are your front of house should understand how to deal with customers / we need to perhaps being thinking about opening Friday nights or Saturday nights, or Sunday nights for a few hours / looking at what we are expecting from our own staff / in that we are looking a lot more at the bottom line / also look at trying to increase the recreational, the financial return through tourism or recreation / and really I'm sort of wanting our staff to become more involved in delivering services to the public / that will bring them along so that they own the process of change / trying to get some assessment what services and what standards of services you've got to apply / To look at how well we're doing there and should we be improving that and how could we improve it.

- for the *formal customer service policy/operational instructions* property:

Which both gives instructions on how one should comport themselves with customers with some procedures.

- for the *getting the whole organisation working together and helping* property:

Because the customer focus can only work if you've got the whole of the organisation working together and helping you with that / And they [staff] must understand what is required of them.

- for the *risk management approach* property:

And the final step, which we haven't got to yet, is a risk management approach / to see what are going to be the barriers to prevent me achieving my tasks and within the budget I have been given.

- for the *balancing service delivery with customer expectations/compromise between the standard and delivering to a want* property:

But we are in a process of you know trying to match the customers perceptions of what it should be // And what you could find is compromise between standard and delivering to a want.

- for the *making decisions/strategic decisions* property:

The second has been trying to develop what's important and what's not / because there was pressure from PSMO, that you should been running these sorts of surveys and we didn't run the survey / we actually made a conscious decision not to do it.

- for the *challenging the rules* property:

That change enables you to challenge rules, the rules that say we do it this way. We're asking people to challenge the taken for granted assumptions / What it really does do is that it helps people to actually challenge the many taken for granted sort of assumptions / well perhaps there is another way of providing this service, this customer wants, while not breaching that legislation / In my case in technology, I can afford to take risks.

The 'new' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the 'new' theme across the seven properties include:

So what we've now done is said we're forcing the Treasury people that are the generators of the Audit Act and the like, to sort of say, listen guys maybe you should change that now / Well, first of all, we actually know more about this than what we probably should know about it / and we are now in a position where we can profitably review that / and they've had lots of training in the last six months, haven't they (looking at one) / and in fact this agency has got a reputation for being a little bit more entrepreneurial / What I'm saying to you I think is that this is not ad hoc.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'new' theme across the seven properties include:

Its probably that there is, it's an organisation that no-one has critically looked at for thirteen years / that's one area that we haven't tapped into / And they have had no training / But we haven't done anything at the moment / but they are still living on

what she's taught them / Very difficult sometimes but we try to do that / and I think there is still a reasonably high level of risk aversion here.

The 'barrier' theme is generated from data grouped under three properties, namely *things going wrong/not being focused on customers*, *critical issues/problems/gray areas*, *restrictions/things that niggle me*, and *thinking something is not right but not knowing how to do it*. The theme is well represented across all data sets. The notion of 'barrier' comes from the data which suggests **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is related to *processes/systems and methods* which are recognised as inhibiting customer focus efforts. Of the four barriers, *restrictions/things that niggle me* is the most represented across the data. *Thinking something is not right but not knowing how to do it* is the least represented property, represented in only two of the six data sets. Dimensions of the 'barrier' theme are various indicating different 'barriers' encountered by participating agencies in being customer focused.

Illustrative thought units for the 'barrier' theme include,

- for the *things going wrong/not being focused on customers* property:

Well I mean I can only speak in the technology area and when things go wrong / Often the legislation review is required by industry, they are for ever saying its too messy or its too complicated or it doesn't work. we want it to work better / So that is one of our dilemmas is the fact that we have got all those accountability requirements / if the quality of our advice is not good or our advice is not available to them or its not readily accessible to them.

- for the *critical issues/problems/gray areas* property:

So there are a lot of conflicts as well / but we've got the problem of the car parks / And we're having huge problems in this gray area / Its an issue that we've considered for as long as I've been at the organisation which is four years and probably well before that / because its becoming a nightmare / The problem I face though is, that the learning processes and the education process within the organisation / I mean there's things that niggle me.

- for the *restrictions/things that niggle me* property:

But there are so many restrictions / so that was a restriction in getting on with the job / and so when you get back to the visitor there are a lot of restriction within the organisation / and there are still of lot of hurdles in the system which makes it very difficult for you to be that customer focus type organisation / because the structural impediments were too difficult / Oh I'd say the problem definitely at the moment is our restricted opening times from 10 till 5 / I guess from a practical point of view one of the problems is that we've got some many customers / and of course the tyranny of distance in Western Australia / And it is difficult because, well some people have been here what 20, 30 years / You always wish there was more time so you could get around

to the customers more often and spend more time with them / Now in a world of ever dwindling resources / but our biggest challenge I suppose in terms of customer focus is this capacity to put bodies on the ground.

- for the *thinking something is not right but not knowing how to do it* property:

And its one of things that's at the back of your head and your thinking something is not right / were not quite doing what we what could be doing.

The 'barrier' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the 'barrier' theme across the four properties include:

But that has just improved / but we're slowly building up.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'barrier' theme across the four properties include:

So that was bad customer focus / So that's the most, or one of the difficult, areas / the reason why this thing happened was that a spare part for their server wasn't available, it was only available ex the eastern states and when this stuffed up, we didn't get it here for two and a half days.

The 'opportunities' theme is represented as a property in its own right. It is only minimally represented across two data sets. The theme reflects *processes/systems/methods* to the extent that **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is strengthened by identifying *opportunities* as part of being customer focused. Dimensions of this theme vary from the general, including *I'm sure there is a lot more we could do* to the specific, including *be able to produce really nice informative brochures, excellent signage*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'opportunities' theme include:

And capitalising on it from the Parks point of view / and there's Friday night shopping in Perth and those sort of things that we could be tapping into / there's a heap of opportunity here / because there is so many lovely opportunities coming up / I think we can do a lot more / and I'm sure that there is a lot more we could do as information / and I think we're extremely fortunate to have all these wonderful things from the botanical and the woodland, the bush land, and the science.

The 'opportunities' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'opportunities' theme include:

And we're missing out on them / not sort of the best.

The 'threats' theme is generated from data grouped under two properties, namely *customers having the ability to go elsewhere* and *competitors*. It is only minimally represented across three data sets. The theme reflects *processes/systems/methods* to the extent that **our understanding of ourselves as providers** includes recognition of the ability of customers to procure services from alternate service providers. The property *customers having the ability to go elsewhere* conveys the same meaning as the dimension of the same name for the *not servicing/backlash if you don't do it right* property under the *involvement* sub category for the **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

Illustrative thought units for the 'threats' theme include,

- for the *customers ability to go, going elsewhere: not having a mortgage on the service property*:

Because the person that wants has got the ability or will have the ability to go elsewhere / The point that 3 made that people these days can also go elsewhere if they want to / Now we don't have a mortgage on that, they can go elsewhere for that advice if they want to / they will then and can seek alternative avenues. an example might be volunteer insurance / They may well seek advice from volunteer insurance, they may well seek if from us, they may well seek it from somebody else.

- for the *customers ability to go, going elsewhere/ not having a mortgage on the service property*:

Fire and rescue service [competitors] would have the vast number of people.

- *Change* sub category

Change, as a sub category, is strongly supported and well represented throughout all data sets. It is strongly related to the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2 **attitudes towards customers** in that both pertain to the phenomenon of change. It differs from the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2 in that *change* is expressed in terms of respondents perceptions of how they have changed in relation to their *understanding of themselves as providers*, as opposed to perceptions of a *commitment to change* in relation to **attitudes towards customers**.

Change contains four properties, with varying dimensions. *Starting to turn the ship the big turn around* is the most supported property. It is comprised of responses indicating participating organisations to have changed in the way they deal with customers. *Changing the culture/mindsets* is specific to perceptions that indicate a cultural change has occurred. *Precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* pertain to responses which facilitate *change*. *Changing customers perceptions* is the least supported property and pertains to responses indicating a need to change in the way customers view participating agencies *role/purpose*.

Underpinning the four properties are a diverse range of dimensions. These dimensions reflect different ideas on how agencies have *changed*, or need to *change*.

Illustrative thought units for the *starting to turn the ship the big turn around* property include:

So we've switched some of the basic directions of some of the staff / so again we're changing / So we're seeing a switch / I mean, its like everything else, its a time of change / I think its starting to get like that, I think that we're starting to turn the ship around / And that's my view, the big turn around that's really starting to happen / What are the best things, I think its probably in this organisation trying to facilitate change / Customer focus is turning that around / for some people, one of the worst aspects of customer service focus is that it does shake them out of their lethargy / I would say if we hadn't changed our focus I would almost guess by now we would be would be heading towards the dinosaur era / And then it just put everyone into a position of saying, hey we're in this, this means something to me know, before it really didn't.

The property *starting to turn the ship the big turn around* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *starting to turn the ship the big turn around* property include:

We still have some checks and balances, but not like there use to be, so again we're changing / that we've actually change / You can see the change / but we have started making changes / Well we're changing it / And it is moving more and more towards that.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *starting to turn the ship the big turn around* property include:

It was just as difficult to do it, more difficult to get the foot soldiers to come to grips with it / to be fair, management was struggling with the relevance of it to an organisation of this nature / My perception is that it takes people across the organisation varying amounts of time to come to grips with that / and that's part of it, some of 2's frustrations / they have never changed have they [looking at one] / but I

wouldn't say that all the sheep were willing at the moment / But there are probably one or two reluctant sheep coming along with us - or maybe its the Judas Ram.

Illustrative thought units for the *changing the culture/mindsets* property include:

So it has been a cultural change here too / and part of what I see my role here is to change some of the culture / and in the introduction of change, the culture change to the new territory / Whereas existing management is trying to change that culture / That's a fairly significant mindset change / At the end of the day, you've got to change the mentality right across government / But that's what we're trying to do in the organisation and its to change this culture and the mindset of these individuals / On the micro level, its coming down to one, that staff accept that they can work with these events / So we've had to get our people over that level of apprehension that comes from this whole question of measurement / We followed that through in our workplace reform stuff by developing a set of values, staff values.

The property *changing the culture/mindsets* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *changing the culture/mindsets* property include:

And its working now, they know they've got a mission statement.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *changing the culture/mindsets* property include:

Is very difficult / And it is difficult reorienting that particular focus of the scientific staff

Illustrative thought units for the *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* property include:

But we've provided a catalyst / But I think it started out as a you know, the catalyst was in fact the very poor customer service that was perceived / to get a couple of organisations together / and to that, introduce the staff from each area / So everybody knew about it / as I say, the culture is changing because the emphasis is changing / and also them owning the processes of change / so they actually accept why you are trying to do things / When I first came on board, within the first two weeks I gave a talk to the guys about customer focus / and everybody was part of it.

The property *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* property include:

That was pretty successful, bringing together of groups of people / And so what I'm saying really is, its wonderful to see the Kings Park staff are actually saying 'hey we want to be seen / we want to be part of this too.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *precursors for change/acting as the catalyst* property include:

They don't want to know about change / when nobody wants to know about it / and it hadn't been talked about at all / But to disseminate that and to get it to all members of staff is a process which I think was flawed.

Illustrative thought units for the *changing customer perceptions* property include:

And its changing that [customers] perception / What we are finding is some of those local governments who have been very, very critical of our performance are now starting to come on board.

General comment on our understanding of ourselves as providers category

Strongly represented throughout the data is the notion of customer focus as pertaining to **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In terms of *purpose and role*, the data suggests two differing themes, termed 'old' and 'new'. **Our understanding of ourselves as providers** is strongly related to *process systems and methods*. *Process/systems and methods* emerge from the data in terms of themes. These themes are 'new' ways of doing things, in addition to identifying 'barriers', 'opportunities', and 'threats'. **Our understanding of ourselves as providers** appears to be strongly related with the notion of *change*. *Change* is represented in terms of *starting to turn the ship, changing mindsets, and changing customer perceptions*.

Category 5 - Elements which need to be balanced

Elements which need to be balanced as a category is compromised of two sub categories. The category is minimally represented throughout the data. Both sub categories are defined by a single property, termed general. Table 6.5 details the sub categories and properties for the **elements which need to be balanced** category.

TABLE 6.5: Summary of Findings for the Elements Which Need to be Balanced Category

Sub category	Property
Resources and role	General
Words and actions	General

- *Resources and role* sub category

The *general* property of the *resources and role* sub category links various dimensions of *resources and role* that respondents perceive as requiring to be *balanced*. These *general* dimensions include *dimensions of service delivery need to be considered in context* and *we wont hold customers hands endlessly because we don't have the resources*. The property is minimally supported across five of the six data sets. Its significance lies in linking the notions of *purpose/role* with *processes/systems/methods*.

Illustrative thought units of the *general* property include:

You've got to balance the resources and the broader goals and the needs of the community / I mean what lengths do you go to / but they need to be in the context of the task actually being achieved for people / If we are not focused on that level of key customer we simply wont survive / I'm too conscious that if I start to divert my resources into those other nice things that people will want, then it starts to impact on my core business / but its just simply a case of trying to juggle the amount of time you can spend with people on training and the amount of time that's needed to actually be out there doing it / That sort of support then stopped it from becoming a formal complaint which we then are obliged to follow up on and it takes a lot more of the organisations resources / No we won't do that [leaving the files open] because we cant do that for everybody / from consumer affairs to fair trading, its about trying to probably not provide a Rolls Royce service for everyone that walks in the door but to actually get a better fair trading environment for the people of Western Australia / and one of the things that we have to grapple is, how much do you do for the individual that walks through the door compared to with the community as a whole / and you've got to look at your responsibilities to the tax payers and everyone else, you can not just go down helping somebody sort of endlessly / Its related to what their [country staff] comfortable with on what they think and what's going to make the most noise / because we had a real problem in terms of meeting the new government agenda with even less resources / Its seems to me that its just a different balance from say an operating department / we do have the standard obligations that are required by any public service organisation.

- *Words and actions* sub category

The *general* property of the *words and actions* sub category indicates that what organisations say they do is inconsistent with what they actually do. Dimensions of the *general* property include *forced to act in way that is inconsistent with those words* and *that's why there is a bit of humbug about it*. The property is minimally supported across two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *general* property include:

Because this is sort of words which could be interpreted very literally, and I say, there are actions that sometimes your forced to act in way that is inconsistent with those words / Particularly things that the survey highlighted was where there was a difference between words and actions / What the survey identified was a whole lot of things that were much more subtle / well I mean you can imagine what would happen, but that's what customer service says you should do, you should go out and deal with Joe Blow's rental property first but you don't do that, not in practice / So that's why there's a bit of humbug about it.

General comment on elements which need to be balanced category

There is a hint in the data suggesting a number of elements required to be balanced in being customer focused. This balancing is primarily between *resources and role*. At a minimal level, evidence from two data sets indicates that there is inconsistency between organisation intentions and actions.

Category 6 - Perceptions of customer focus

Perceptions of customer focus as a category is compromised of three sub categories. The category is minimally represented throughout the data. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.6 details the sub categories and properties for the **perceptions of customer focus** category.

TABLE 6.6: Summary of Findings for the Perceptions of Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Government customer focus program	Strategy/philosophy/ideology
	Consulting/decision making/focused
	External focus
	Improvement
	Positive
PSMO/Government/Minister	Negative
	Role/purpose
	Supporting/following up
	Consulting/making their charter known
	Not supporting/not following up
Other agencies	Not consulting/not making their charter known
	Not customer focused/not treating us like customers
	Feeling something negative about leadership in government
Other agencies	Not consulting/not communicating
	Poor service

- *Government customer focus program* sub category

The *government customer focus program* sub category is comprised of six properties. Dimensions of these properties are various reflecting a diversity of perspectives on the *governments customer focus program* amongst respondents. The sub category is only minimally represented throughout the data.

Properties and dimensions of the *government customer focus program* sub category pertain to three themes. These themes are termed 'general', 'positive' and 'negative'. The 'general' theme is generated from data relating to the *strategy/philosophy/ideology, consulting/decision making/focused, external focus, and improvement* properties. In other words, the *government customer focus program* is viewed as pertaining to these four properties.

The 'positive' and 'negative' themes relate to the *positive* and *negative* properties respectively. Although the themes are only minimally supported throughout the data, 'negative' views are more strongly represented. Dimensions of the 'positive' theme relate to *staff getting some benefits* and *the program was presented quite well*. Dimensions of the 'negative' theme relate to *its absolutely horse shit, a fad* and *not well thought through*. Although the themes are only minimally supported throughout the data, 'negative' views are more strongly represented than 'positive' ones.

Illustrative thought units of the 'general' theme include,

- for the *strategy/philosophy/ideology* property:

That this is a new initiative, new government initiative / Customer focus as the government strategy or customer focus as a philosophy / This government clearly thinks that one of those strategies is to give a focus onto the need for its agencies to deliver the deliverables to the customers / In itself its only one of probably hundreds of things the institution would take on each year to consider and move it in the direction it needs to go / its almost ideological / to maximise the benefits of its governments for the people of WA.

- for the *consulting/decision making/focused* property:

I mean clearly with the government strategy there's a definite emphasis with consultation with the community / I mean that and the charter and all the rest of it, its a fairly strong indication that they [PSMO] really wanted agencies to listen to the community / because clearly they wanted to link directly community feedback to the agencies concerned / I think the existence of the customer focus program has perhaps made us even more focused in that direction.

- for the *external focus* property:

Well from whole of government it really has to do mostly with servicing the people of the state, as the original idea of it was / where under the PSMO thing they [staff] weren't really regarded as clients / I think that the whole of Government was much more about externals.

- for the *improvement* property:

And maintain a level of service as high as possible / when the whole thing was launched, it was launched with that focus that was how it started off, to try improve service / to give emphasis to what it saw as the importance of maintaining client services throughout the government agencies / To put a better front on government service for the populace.

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include:

Its been in the right direction, been a positive thing / The best thing I think is that it provides relevance to what it is you do / He or she is just getting a slight pat on the back / and the guy who really may mow the lawns, all day, every day and he thinks, oh, yeah, that's OK, hope you enjoyed it / I think its been a salutary exercise for them [staff] / What this has allowed them [staff] to do is to actually say what we do for our customers / Oh actually that was presented quite well / I feel positive about it / At its most basic I think its a good government initiative for the right reasons / And its been very positive, its been a great experience.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include:

They are pretty cynical about these sort of issues / Absolutely horse shit / I think its the yet another initiative syndrome the customer focus stuff, and are you doing this because the Premier wants it stuff / but I think in the way its presented the Premier's initiative, it was seen as a bit of you know well this is another thing / but I mean there is an awful lot of humbug about this customer service really / Although it seemed to go very well at the start and then sort of fizzle a little / some things have fallen by the wayside / The visitor focus group and the divisional meetings have sort of fell away / I've got to disagree, I'd be very surprised if customer focus in itself has statistically significant effect on us / I don't think it would have been any difference at all / Well I suppose its a bit rich to say bums on seats / It maybe well pay off one day but I probably take I's point, I mean if we hadn't have done it probably 340,000 people may of come / I think that in a sense your looking at something that is not very appropriate to our organisation / so it most probably gave it more questions than answers/ Also in the approach, its not only that its a bad, its in the approach, that it isn't planned / so it was kind of like yeah, it wasn't very well thought through, it was negative / and I think that this comment applies to all these sort of initiatives that Government kind of gets into is, that there is insufficient thought given to how these all tie together / we probably could come up with quite good initiatives ourselves that would fit in easy with our work, that would not have taken us away from the main, that's the thing, and would perhaps put less administrative stuff on it / and I think that is quite negative and that's quite destructive and that unfortunately comes with the territory because of the way its been promoted / we have got all these things on, and here is another one we have to do / and here is another set of reports we have got to produce and another set of

committees we have got to set up and another thing on top of everything else / And that's really important, the administrative costs to an organisation to keep tabs on how many times you answer your phone in 4 rings and whether or not you answer your paper in exactly five days.

- *PSMO/government/Minister* sub category

The *PSMO/government/Minister* sub category is comprised of seven properties. The first of these is termed the *role/purpose* property. This property contains various dimensions of what respondents perceive as *PSMO/government/Minister's, role/purpose*.

Illustrative thought units for the *PSMO/government/Minister* property include:

That's the role of the central agencies / provided that they continue to act as the watch keeper / and acting in a way that facilitates our organisational goals / they won't act in such a way to compromise whole of government requirements simply to service a narrow requirement from this agency / But PSMO does not have so much power about the way that they might achieve the goals for Government / PSMO is the tool of the Premier's office / Well, what we did is, the customer focus you know PSMO came through to see with pretty well with what needs to be done / The government is only in my view um the statutory spokes person, if I can use that term, for the will of the people via the democratic process / because the government is the agency that oversees how effective the consolidated fund allocations is being spent / Well I guess the government is ultimately there to serve the people / I mean that presumably in a democratic society is where the election process starts from / and they also, they also have been given a mandate by the so called people of Western Australia to implement a policy direction.

The remaining six properties of the *PSMO/government/Minister* sub category emerge as pertaining to two themes, termed 'positive' and 'negative'. Data grouped under the 'positive' theme includes responses suggesting *PSMO/government/Minister* to be perceived as being customer focused. The 'positive' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions of respondents which view *PSMO/government/Minister* in a positive light. Grouped under the 'positive' theme are the properties *supporting/following up* and *consulting/making their charter known*. The data indicates *PSMO/government/Minister* are viewed positively by respondents against these properties, which includes the dimensions *having plenty of stuff on offer* and *are reasonably open*.

Data grouped under the 'negative' theme includes responses suggesting *PSMO/government/Minister* to be perceived as not being customer focused. The 'negative' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions of respondents which view *PSMO/government/Minister* in a negative light. Grouped under the 'negative' theme

are the properties *not supporting/not following up, not consulting/not making their charter known, not customer focused/not treating us like customers and feeling something negative about the leadership in government*. The data indicates *PSMO/government/Minister* are viewed negatively by respondents against these properties, which includes the dimensions *not being backing up the customer focus initiative and no idea of what they think/don't know who they are*.

Although both themes are only minimally supported throughout the data, 'negative' views are more strongly represented.

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include,

- for the *supporting/following up* property:

So they are doing follow up as well / and we get periodic phone calls, what's happening with your customer service charter and your focus and those sorts of things / In terms of giving us some ideas in what they expected from us / And there was a good amount of documentation and support and so forth / And the support was certainly there from that perspective / If we spoke to someone at the PSMO we were given examples of other organisations customer service charters / But there was plenty of stuff on offer / and I think what they provided us with gave us a good start along the road / In my previous employment when we were setting up a previous agency, we were setting up a customer service charter, you know we certainly got a good level of support from them / my personal dealings with people in PSMO have been pretty effective / Uniformly, they've been good people to deal with / So just from that narrow field within the customer focus area, I thought that PSMO were customer focused / that virtually none of the problems that we experienced with that process came from PSMO / PSMO to my knowledge had cleared all the paperwork in a timely and effective way / and I suppose the only experience I've had with them really is that when they run various courses that we might tap in to / and they are actually giving excellent training for their staff / and that their reasonably open in sharing that information / and I think that most probably most people in government think they are there to do the right thing by the people who voted them.

- for the *consulting/making their charter known* property:

Well they don't, well at the shallow level they have certainly made their charter known / They have distributed their charter at least two or three times to myself and to the CEO / they're talking to us, they're coming there, that's not the demands being made on them by Government / They have also sent things out for comment, so you at least get a chance to get an idea of what policy papers or things are going to come out and what they contain / so asking for comment. So that's better I think / They also seem to be working with some kind of focus groups now, like they have a group of their own focus group feeding information in I think and testing things out with that, and they have these different policy groups and the groups contain members of different agencies so at least there is some kind of input going into when they are deciding initiatives / Oh individual departments, sorry. Individual departments. I think they are really trying very hard to improve / I think they are getting better in asking first and acting afterwards / I think that they are getting better, like they do contact a bit more

frequently and they will sometimes ask you about stuff beforehand / and I think this you know, there has been kind of a fair bit of encouragement to do that / I've found that they're highly competent people / they have an excellent background in governments.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include,

- for the *looking after not supporting/not following* property:

So the PSMO could well direct a lot of their energies at some of those bodies / what do you call it, their corporate services had been taken away from them and given to us / They don't. They don't back it up / I mean I don't have a great reliance that they've got any secret answers or secret views / and not with a lot of strength from PSMO / Government wants responses to Cabinet Submissions, it wants you know papers, speeches written for this and papers written for that, its totally looking away from operations of the department / You looking and there's another project, I mean to look at the amount of resources that go in to actually servicing government in that sense, its enormous. The cost of ministerials, of ministerial letters, the cost of you know providing briefing notes and reports and all those sorts of things is enormous in terms of peoples time / I think there was an underlying thinking behind it that the Public Sector *per se* was sort of all into itself / But its sort of allied all this sort of, well we don't really need so many people working for the public sector because you know you can do it with fewer people, or you can contract this out, or we don't need this and this and this / but I know in that particular instance that their brief was to actually produce the package and I don't think anybody really thought that it was even important / But I think that its the old story you know, its like the charge of the light brigade, its the general sitting there back at the top, the troops aren't gonna go forward too fast.

- for the *not consulting/not making their charter known* property:

I haven't got a clue what they think / Your asking us what PSMO might think of other things [laugh] / Exactly, but that's the only evidence that we can go on, I mean, they might well think about it in other ways but who knows, I mean as we have said, we don't know what they think / but going on the paper which is all we can go on / Well I don't know that organisation well enough to know it at an organic level, I access it on an individual basis, as needs arise and I'm not in contact with them more than about once or twice a month / so it needs to show its achieving those aims / but I've seen enough politicians to know that there is considerable self interest involved / And the need to be re-elected is extremely strong amongst the politicians / The cynical reason is they do it because they want to get re-elected and / That's pretty cynical, because we don't think that / and sometimes I think that because of the power of the agencies, agencies such as Treasury and so forth, basically they're dictating rather than interacting / Yeah, there's no consultation.

- for the *not customer focused/not treating us like customers* property:

In terms of agencies they had not got on that much of a customer focus at all, and this is true of all central agencies / But they don't treat us like customers very well / I think with PSMO and other central agency, Treasury as well, they are different because the mass of Government does not have the same vested interest in servicing the needs of individual departments as we have in / and government is slow to move on those things / No I don't see government as a client / Well that's not a customer focus and that's

what the government says / and carrying on as if they are you know, I'm god and you can all go to buggary.

- for the *feeling something negative about leadership in government* property:

And you feel something about the leadership of / You get very annoyed you know / I mean I get very narky about this you know / so you get very annoyed you know / I means its just totally infuriating and it should be actually out sourced / Its things like that you know, there the sort of things which really get up your nose / So you, and its mostly to do with money you know money matters and things like that / and you can see it happening in its various ways and means, people trying to manipulate whatever to get the best advantage.

- *Other agencies* sub category

The *other agencies* sub category is comprised of two properties. *Not consulting/not communicating* and *poor customer service* both relate to a similar theme, termed 'negative'. In other words, respondents perceptions of *other agencies* customer focus convey a 'negative' sentiment. The 'negative' theme is minimally supported, represented across four of the six data sets.

Dimensions of the 'negative' theme relate to various elements of *consulting/communicating* as described under the *involvement* sub category of *our attitudes towards our customers* and *servicing* as described under the *end results/outcomes* sub category of **structure of customer focus** category.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include,

- for the *not consulting/not communicating* property:

Who are Treasury talking to. I don't think they talk to their public do they. I don't think so / [sarcastically] Have you ever been to a training session which treasury runs? An enlightening experience. Wouldn't you think about customer focus there? / Exactly, so where's the customer focus in there / Or you write them a letter and you never get an answer / And that's it! You don't like it lump it! / And its really interesting that stuff because every workshop I have ever run about customer focus, when you ask for bad examples it is always private enterprise, it is always private enterprise.

- for the *poor servicing* property:

You mean, you talk to treasury, customer focus, you gotta be jokin', what's that / Well I'm not too sure if they are, but they're sort of feel as though they're Gods inheritance, end of story you know / I've got communication with agencies, they don't care / when you talk to some of these people in you know in central agencies and you get all this garbage coming back / With some of them, that's what I'm saying, its very frustrating

/ Now I honestly just think they just don't see us as clients and we don't necessarily I think perceive them totally as clients either / [being cynical] You want a certificate, its customer focused, they make you wait, you get your certificate I mean / Its quite at odds with some of the utilities and that sort, where you want your water mate, you better pay your bill / And very mindful of the fact that banks are no good at it / A lot of these private sector client orientated organisations are very poor at it, so this business that I introduces which is very valid of going in there and basically having to demand the service or whatever, it is not unique to government.

General comment on perceptions of customer focus category

Emerging from the data is the notion of customer focus being influenced by respondents perceptions on the *governments customer focus program*, perceptions on customer focus exhibited by *PSMO/government/Minister* and **perceptions of customer focus** exhibited by *other agencies*. The data indicates respondents hold both 'negative' and 'positive' **perceptions of customer focus**. Overall, responses indicate respondents to hold more negative **perceptions of customer focus**.

Category 7 - Customer factors impacting on customer focus

Customer factors impacting on customer focus as a category is comprised of six sub categories. The category is minimally represented throughout the data. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.7 details the sub categories and properties for the **customer factors impacting on customer focus** category.

TABLE 6.7: Summary of Findings for the Customer Factors Impacting on Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Customer types	Not just people walking through the doors, the public of Western Australia Externals/anybody who wants a service People who fund us/sponsors Stakeholders/others we work with/ others we work for Internal Internal and external
Servicing relationship	Serving customers on behalf of someone else Others servicing customers on our behalf Customers under our control Customers owned by other customers of ourselves
Customer behaviours and abilities	Various Negative
Perceived customer status	Key customers/see the minister as god/significant others/wear a different number of stripes Bodies able to change things/capacity to promote us/power over what we do Thrusting upon us/pressure on us to change
Service context/location	Different ways of responding between metro and country In a country town everybody knows you
Government factors	Various Meeting all the statutory requirements of government/bloody reporting requirements

- *Customer types* sub category

Customer types, as a sub category, is comprised of six properties. These properties reflect differences in perspectives of who customers are. No clear picture emerges as to what is a *customer*. Rather, *customer types* are various depending upon the context in which they are referred to. In some instances, *customers* are referred to as individuals *external* to the organisation who are in need of a service. In other contexts, *customers* include *fellow Workers* (the internals) and *stakeholders* that the organisation has a reporting responsibility. Further still, *customers types* include *all peoples of the state of Western Australia*, regardless whether or not they are in need of a service.

The sub category is moderately represented across all data sets. Of the six properties, *stakeholders/others we work with/others we work for* is the most supported,

represented across five data sets. The least supported properties are *people who fund us/sponsors* and *internal and external*, both of which are represented only once in two different data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *customer types* sub category include:

The ultimate customer, the public of western Australia / our customers are the people of Western Australia / the general population / the people who walk through the door on a day-to-day basis / but in the context of customer service and how our I see customer focus, I see that as being for the people who access our services as a member of the public / The Aboriginal community / Senior citizens in particular / and the first one being visitors, and they are the casual visitor / but I see our customers primarily the people who fund us / which includes the local governments and the brigades / our guides, our friends, or operator of shops and commercial entities in Kings Park / and then thirdly we have actually defined the stakeholders as a third party / we've actually identified our Ministers office, Cabinet, other government agencies and central government policies / then I'm servicing the minister, he is clearly my client, my customer in that sense / so my customers are industry, you know industry associations, individual members of industry, consumers who use the industry's services / and then from him the Board / They were our sponsors / In our organisation too, our customers are people from other public sector organisations / so our customers are, you know, are all internal / Oh I have a very clear view. Most of my clients, my direct clients are all internal / I perceive our staff to be clients in terms of customer services / so customer focus to me are internal clients and external clients.

- *Servicing relationships* sub category

Servicing relationships, as a sub category, is comprised of four properties. The four properties refer to different types of *relationships* between service providers and consumers of services. For example, the property *servicing customers on behalf of someone else*, refers to a type of *servicing relationship* whereby respondents are required to provide services on behalf of another organisation. The property, *customers under our control*, refers to a type of *servicing relationship* whereby respondents provide services to customers who are accountable to the management of the service provider.

The sub category is minimally supported, represented in only three of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *servicing relationships* sub category include:

Other organisations which we serve is on behalf of the Minister if you like / the builders registration board we have a lot to do with and I see them as customers because we interact with them on behalf of the Minister / where because a lot of the shires in the Swan region in fact are under our control / because at the end of the day, under the Bush Fires Act John, the brigades are physically owned by, managed by, maintained by, insured by the local government and shires / volunteers guides run this information office for visitors.

- *Customer behaviours and abilities*

Customer behaviours and abilities, as a sub category, is comprised of two properties termed *various* and *negative*. The sub category is only minimally supported, represented across five of the six data sets.

The sub category suggests that *customer behaviours and abilities* are a factor influencing the type of service provided by respondents. Dimensions grouped under the *various* property pertain to phenomena concerned with particular attributes of customers which ensure service delivery, including *people who write letters* and *people who ring up and complain*. A sense emerging under this property is the notion of *customer behaviours and abilities* as variables which can neither be controlled nor predicted.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

And you know more recently we have had the shire of Kojinup come along to us / coming in as a tourist, coming in as part, a community person / in the sense that the people know enough to ring up on the phone, they articulate enough, they've got good English / they know how to write letters so they're the ones that get the service / although there is a lot of repeat in that / you can't control all the variables / but often that's because I couldn't and in hindsight, could not be expected to as predictable over variables would play out / These things by their nature are very difficult and very subjective in many cases.

Dimensions grouped under the *negative* property are also concerned with particular attributes of customers, except in these contexts, a *negative* evaluation is associated with the attribute. Examples of *negative* dimensions of *customer behaviours and abilities* include *extraordinarily difficult and provocative customers* and *teachers worse than the kids*.

Illustrative thought units for the *negative* property include:

And sometimes you'll find that in fact that it's the customer that was extraordinarily difficult and provocative / And you can have some very difficult schools / the teachers come through, they're worse than the kids / To me that was scary.

- *Perceived customer status*

Perceived customer status, as a sub category, pertains to responses suggesting customers are not all viewed as being equal. The property *key customers: see the*

minister as god/significant others/wear a different number of stripes/power over what we do suggest some customers, including *ministers* and *boards*, are perceived to be more important than others. The property *bodies able to change things/capacity to promote us* suggests some customers as exerting a controlling influence over services providers. *Thrusting upon us/pressure on us to change* provides evidence on how some customers are able to exert an influence over service providers.

Of the six sub categories for the **customer factors impacting on customer focus** category, *perceived customer status* is the most supported, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *key customers/see the minister as god significant others/wear a different number of stripes* property include:

Because you have always got to look at, I mean they've got in a sense a different, they wear a different number of stripes on their sleeves / Everybody would understand that stripes on the shoulder stuff / Well, lets take the example of the Minister who is one of our important customers I suppose / I see the minister as God / Not in the same way as I perceive the people who walk through our doors as a client / and that there are significant others that this agency has to interrelate with and service / But he [the minister] is a significant other, if I can put it that way / the Chief Executive of that department is going to be judged on whether he meets what government wants or not.

Illustrative thought units for the *bodies able to change things/capacity to promote us power over what we do* property include:

And they can move us around and you know, they have a certain, you know, power over what we can do / It seems to me they have some power / but the simple things is if we do not maintain a strong customer focus at the ministerial level, the board level, the local government level, the brigade level, then we won't survive / Yeah and he certainly has the capacity to promote the gallery anyway in his daily work that he does and the people that he comes into contact with / and they can make us not exists in a sense, they can say well sorry, well we won't have one of those organisations any more.

Illustrative thought units for the *thrusting upon us/pressure on us to change* property include:

And in fact there was pressure to hold the survey earlier / And you get shat on/ We've been thrust in to most probably the first ministerial portfolio to adopt an amalgamated corporate service.

- *Service context/location*

Service context/location, as a sub category, contains two properties, namely *different ways of responding between metro and country* and *in a country town everybody knows you*. Both properties pertain to thought units which suggest differences in standard and/or type of service delivery based on geographical location of where the service is requested. The properties suggest service delivery provided in locations other than head office locations is of the 'old' *purpose/role* theme as described previously under **our understanding of ourselves as providers** category. In other words, service delivery away from head offices is characterised as the *past view/old role/the classic*.

The *different ways of responding between metro and country* property is minimally supported across three of the six data sets. Illustrative thought units for the property include:

The other thing I think though, that I raised briefly earlier on, is that you provide the service within the context that you have / and in the country you have a different context / We [head office employees] cant always do that [hold hands endlessly] / that doesn't mean to say that we don't help people, but you can't sort of hold there hand endlessly / and in Perth [head office] we will then close off our file and say that person has gone to the small claims tribunal / they [regional offices] still much operate on that older model / An individual gets Rolls Royce service in the country, not the community / I mean really we should be servicing regional Western Australia probably a lot more than what we are doing.

The *in a country town everybody knows you* property is also minimally supported, represented in only one of the six data sets. The property is important in that it provides insights into why individuals away from head office locations continue to deliver services under the 'old' theme of *purpose/role*.

Illustrative thought units for the *in a country town everybody knows you* property include:

You are a part of the community and you behave in a community spirited way/ whereas because partly its a country town and everybody knows you / and if you walk into Coles there going to tell you there latest problem / your going to face that person in the supermarket or sit next to in church or whatever.

- *Government factors*

Government factors, as a sub category, is comprised of a number of properties which suggests government, in terms of a *customer type*, to be different from others. This

sub category reinforces the notion of not all customers being viewed equally as suggested in the sub category, *perceived customer status* above. The *various* property includes a wide range of properties including *slow to move on things* and *very conscious of government priorities*.

Illustrative thought units of the *various* property include:

That has taken what nearly six months to get through / because governments taking three to four months to make a decision / The other things are, we are expected to raise revenue but within our by-laws we're not allowed to charge / We're very conscious of governments priorities / I think it was more in the first instance they were asking for certain procedures and strategies to be in place.

A further dimension to the *government factors* sub category concerns thought units placed under the property *meeting all the statutory requirements of government/bloody reporting requirements*. A negative theme emerges from the data concerning the services required by government. This underpins the view of the standards imposed by government in implementing the customer focus strategy as being *quick fix, Mickey mouse, low level things* as emerged under the *standards performance indicators* sub category for the **structure of customer focus** category.

Illustrative thought units of the *meeting all the statutory requirements of government/bloody reporting requirements* property include:

We still have to meet all the reporting requirements / so all these statutory obligations that we have to meet / because of the amount of bloody government reporting that we have to do / but nevertheless, government reporting seems to get in the way of delivering the deliverable and that's on government as a client in itself.

General comment on customer factors impacting on customer focus category

Emerging from the data are a number of **customer factors impacting on customer focus**. The most supported factors are the notions of *customer types* and *perceived customer status*. *Customer types* is moderately represented throughout the data, with varying and often conflicting properties. In other words, there is no clear sense for what is a *customer*. The least represented **customer factor impacting on customer focus** is *servicing relationships*. In other words, the picture is emerging of *customer types* and *perceive customer status* as the most important **customer factor impacting on customer focus**, with *relationships* as the least supported phenomenon.

Category 8 - Finding out about customers

Finding out about customers as a category is comprised of three sub categories. Each sub category is defined by a number of properties. Table 6.8 details the sub categories and properties for the **finding out about customers** category.

TABLE 6.8: Summary of Findings for the Finding Out About Customers Category

Sub category	Property
Communication and building relationships	Understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you
	Family-friend relationship analogy for internal-external customers.
	Finding out the differences/there is going to be a difference between customers
	Finding out what customers think/giving customers an opportunity to say what they think
Processes/systems/methods	Evaluation/measuring/the global picture
	Bringing survey results back into the organisation
Mindset/attitude	Culture of measuring

Overall, the category is minimally supported throughout the data.

Processes/systems/methods is the most supported sub category, represented across all data sets. *Communication and building relationships* is minimally supported, represented across four of the six data sets. *Mindset/attitude* is weakly supported in context of **finding out about customers**, represented across only one data set.

- *Communication and building relationships* sub category

Communication and building relationships, as a sub category, is comprised of four properties. The sub category is minimally supported, represented across all data sets. The first of these is termed *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you*. This label is a thought unit derived from the data. The property is important in that it builds a link between the two previously discussed categories, **attitudes towards customers** and **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. **Attitudes towards customers** is principally concerned with notions concerning *understanding the customer*. **Customer understanding of ourselves as providers** is principally concerned with notions concerning *the customer understanding you*. In other words, the categories **attitudes towards customers** and **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** suggest customer focus as being essentially a communicative phenomenon.

Illustrative thought units of the *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you* property include:

In any situation your got to understand your customer and your customer has to understand you / Yeah, and its actually being a part of building the new relationship / but we are trying to build much stronger bridges, much stronger communication with our clients / you know it certainly makes you realise that that communication needs to exist / So as long as you've got that channel of communication / So what I have done, I started going around and talking to all my customers / and I think you would also be looking for evidence that the organisation is talking to its customers / I'm not so sure, I mean I try keep a good communication base with all people / you don't even take the trouble to find out what my deadlines are and why they are important to me / So it really has put the realisation back in their back yard that to enable them to get to that point they have got to assist us as well / But the point I'm raising with this, is that if good faith does not prevail in all of these things / So we really wanted to be quite clear / so that the organisation is not again just holding itself, but its staying interactive with the community I suppose and doing things for them.

The property *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you* property include:

We have proactively developed a relationship with Channel 7 and the West Australian.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *understanding the customer plus the customer understanding you* property include:

There is still a barrier with Treasury and IT / our customer perceived that we didn't go out and talk to them / Well, it wasn't directly from me to a customer / because they didn't understand each others business necessarily.

The second property is termed *family-friend relationship analogy for internal-external customers*. This property suggests different types of relationships to exist between different customer groups. Accordingly, this property underpins sentiments emerged under the **customer factors impacting on customer focus** category to the extent that there are different customer groups with varying *perceived customer status*. Dimensions of the property suggest that service providers are *less tolerant with and don't give the same latitude to, internal customers*.

Illustrative thought units of the *family-friend relationship analogy for internal-external customers* property include:

So its a bit like a family relationship I suppose / Its the mother, or father - son relationship, mother - daughter relationship / so you're looking at perhaps because these internal ones are part of the family so to speak / You're also deal more closely with internal ones / you don't have as much tolerance for them [internal customers] or for their mistakes as you do for the outer [external customers] / So for us, yes, the internal ones I would say, perhaps we don't necessarily give them quite the latitude that you get with the external ones / that in families people tend to be a little more blunt than they do with the visitor who comes / Family don't really deserve that same courtesy that you would give to the client who is paying the bill.

The third property is termed *finding out what the customers think giving customers an opportunity to say what they think*. Viewing communication as the sharing of meaning, this property is concerned with meanings from the customer perspective. The fourth property is termed *finding out the differences there is going to be a difference between customers*. This property is concerned with meanings from the service provider perspective. Collectively, the two properties pertain to the sharing of meanings, and accordingly, grouped under the *communication and building relationships* sub category.

Illustrative thought units of the *finding out the differences: there is going to be a difference between customers* property include:

To actually find out the difference / so there is going to be a difference for six of them / the seven are not going to be the same so there is going to be a difference for six of them.

Illustrative thought units of the *finding out what customers think/ giving customers an opportunity to say what they think* property include:

Because we decided in June this year to find out what our customers really thought / and were given an opportunity to say what do you think.

- *Processes/systems/methods*

Processes/systems/methods, as a sub category, is comprised of two properties.

The first property is termed *evaluation/measuring/the global picture*. Dimensions of this property are wide ranging reflecting different *processes/systems/methods* used by participating organisations in *finding things out about customers*. Dimensions include *customer profiles, complaint management system, customer surveys, interviews, getting feedback, asking questions, testing, and piloting and trialing things*. The theme linking the dimensions together is the notion of *evaluation and measurement* as the means to *finding things out about customers*.

Illustrative thought units for the *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* property include:

So there is still a need for evaluation / I suppose our complaint management system / So we employed a consultant who did a very large benchmark survey of all of our services and surveyed all our client groups and also surveyed all of our service providers / So he surveyed the service providers perceptions of what sort of service they are providing and the clients perceptions of service providers / one of these interviews that we've conducted / Once we found out, we found it out on paper you know / Other than getting feedback as we go along about things that we are doing / We get a lot of feedback / We also get written feedback / so there's a feedback process which we monitor / and ask various questions of visitors who come to the museum / Listening to customers / And it was a big thing that we were piloting through something / We've also done visitor research / and gathering research from the public.

The *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* property also contains both, explicit evaluations suggesting old systems as not being very effective, and positive explicit evaluations of things currently being undertaken as being effective.

Illustrative thought units of explicit evaluations suggesting old systems of *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* as not being very effective include:

Um it wasn't effective / Originally I'd say we didn't have a good system for complaint management / was really never up to scratch until we implemented this new system / because they [customers] didn't perceive it was going to be effective in the first place / A few people wrote things down but nothing of any significance.

Illustrative thought units of positive explicit evaluations of things currently being undertaken as being effective include:

But I think the other thing that's perhaps important to say, and to the credit of this agency, they did do a survey / we run survey programs within the organisation on a regular basis to get some feedback / the overwhelming feedback of course is that the performance of the staff is absolutely excellent / First time, last year, they did it, it worked extremely well.

The second property, *bringing survey results back into the organisation*, suggests not only do organisations collect information on customers, but that this information is shared with other members of the organisation.

Illustrative thought units for the *bringing survey results back into the organisation* property include:

Every area got the results of the survey as it applied to them as well as a global picture / and bring them back [results] into the organisation.

The *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* property is strongly supported, represented across all data sets. In contrast, *bringing survey results back into the organisation* is represented in one data set only. However, this property is important to the extent that the *processes/systems/methods* of **finding out about customers** implies doing more than *evaluation/measuring/the global picture*, it also requires sharing the information with all members of the organisation.

- *Mindsets/attitudes* sub category

The *mindsets/attitudes* sub category is comprised of one property, termed *culture of measuring*. The property suggests the two properties of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category (namely *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* and *bringing survey results back into the organisation*), as pertaining to a particular type of *mindset/attitude*. In this instance, the type of *mindset/attitude* is referred to as a *culture of measuring*. This type of *mindset attitude* strongly relates to the 'open attitude' theme of customer awareness in the **attitudes towards customers** category. In other words, a *culture of measuring* is strongly related with the notions of *thinking from the customer perspective, focusing on - understanding your customers, and knowing who the customers are and what their needs are.*

The property is represented in one of the six data sets. However, within this data set, the notion is well supported.

Illustrative thought units of the *culture of measuring* property include:

So if your not measuring, then ultimately your capacity to improve is not high / I guess the old story, what you don't measure you don't control and what you don't control you don't manage, and what you don't manage you don't improve / That is something new to this agency / in the past there has not been a culture of passing out a survey form / and again every participant was asked to complete a fairly rigorous survey form.

The *culture of measuring* property also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Explicit positive evaluation demonstrate contexts where participating organisations are exhibiting *culture of measuring*. In contrast, explicit negative evaluations demonstrate contexts where participating organisations are not exhibiting a *culture of measuring*. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *culture of measuring* property include:

So therefore we must be doing well because they are all passing.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *culture of measuring* property include:

And I heard one of my officers say last year, we don't need to measure our participants at training courses because they all pass.

General comment on finding out about customers category

The picture emerges of customer focus as pertaining to **finding out about customers**. **Finding out about customers** translates most strongly in terms of *processes/systems/methods*. *Processes/systems/methods* includes *evaluation/measuring/the global picture* and *bringing survey results back into the organisation*. There is evidence suggesting a relationship between *processes/systems/methods* and *mindsets/attitudes*. This is expressed in terms of a *culture of measuring*. In other words, *evaluation measuring the global picture* and *bringing survey results back into the organisation* is related to an 'open' *attitude towards customers*. Emerging at a minimal level is a relationship between **finding out about customers**, and *communication and building relationships*.

Category 9 - Organisational factors impacting on customer focus

Organisational factors impacting on customer focus as a category is comprised of seven sub categories. The sub categories are minimally represented throughout the data sets to varying degrees. While some sub categories are represented across all data sets, others emerge across only two. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 6.9 details the sub categories and properties for the **organisational factors impacting on customer focus** category.

TABLE 6.9: Summary of Findings for the Organisational Factors Impacting on Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Resources and capacity	Knowing your capabilities and capacity/maximising effectiveness with the resources you have
	Not having the capacity/bucket only so deep
Volunteers and guides	General
	Volunteers our block
	Volunteers our valuable resource
Management culture and role	Various
	Management behaviour as customers
Relationships	Internal customer focus/association with your staff/teamwork
	Having positive feelings
Involvement and commitment	Seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts/staff commitment
	Not involving staff
Staff/comportment of our people	Various
	Staff factors attributable to good service
Structure	General
	Divisions are very separate

- *Resources and capacity* sub category

Resources and capacity as a sub category is moderately supported, represented across all data sets. The sub category is concerned with responses pertaining to human and physical resources required for service delivery. The sub category is strongly related to properties pertaining to *resources and capacity* grouped under the 'barrier' theme of *processes/systems/methods* under category 4 **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. Responses are grouped under different categories depending upon the way in which *resources and capacity* are talked about. Under category 4, responses concerned with *resources and capacity* are conveyed as pertaining to

processes/systems/methods in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In contrast, responses grouped under category 9 convey a broad sentiment about *resources and capacity* as being an *organisational factor impacting on customer focus*. The importance of the sub category is the link established between *resources and capacity* in general terms as an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** and more specifically, as an element of *processes/systems/methods* which is viewed as a 'barrier/problem' to customer focus.

Two properties emerge for the sub category. The first property is termed *knowing your capabilities/maximising effectiveness with the resources you have*. Dimensions of this property suggests that there are only a finite number of things participating organisations can deliver given the resources available to them.

Illustrative thought units for the *knowing your capabilities/maximising effectiveness with the resources you have* property include:

Our capacity to handle a volume of people / So that's where this business about resourcing becomes very important / And what you try to do is maximise you effectiveness within the amount of resources that you have / But change the focus of the question, given the resource base that we have / Yeah, well that's the way I'm answering the question. Given the potential to do what / And so given that we've got only 45 people to do all of those things / but ultimately you are doing it all for the best possible mix that you as competent managers can deliver / But the organisation is in a sort of a state where yes we've got a lot of people here / can we have answered the phone within 4 rings, or send your papers back within a week.

The second property is termed *not having the capacity bucket only so deep*. This property is also comprised of dimensions relating *resources and capacity* with the ability to provide services. However, in this property, the data suggests participating organisations do not have the *capacity and resources* to provide the services that are expected of them.

Illustrative thought units for the *not having the capacity bucket only so deep* property include:

And I mean there's a limit with what one can do with people / And as I said previously you know, I mean we are under staffed / so its, in that area we are totally under resourced / And the challenge of course is given the limited number of people / because practically you can't meet every request / Supporting that then is the ability to, how do you interact with 3 million visitors when you've only got four staff here on the weekend / You had to do what you were doing plus you got to do a whole lot of new things / There isn't just enough time as you can see / the stuffs piling up everywhere and in the end / I mean the ratios are wrong / The question is how well and widely you can deliver the services given the resource constraints that the agency has / That's all I mean. I mean we don't have a lot of staff / Well our bucket is only so deep as well /

And the other thing is the lack of funding / but we don't have the money / because in a never diminishing resource phase you / can only squeeze that lemon so much / See the organisation like this is stretched for resources / because you've only got X number of resources, you've only got half X to deal with those individual contacts and the other half in X is going out and talking with traders and industry groups and those sorts of things / it is a time for cuts / but the problem is we have only certain capacity to deliver / I mean we're not geared up for it / Our capacity to be able to service our key customers is very, very limited.

The property not having the capacity/bucket only so deep is more strongly represented throughout the data than the *knowing your capabilities/maximising effectiveness with the resources you have* property.

- *Volunteers/guides* sub category

The *volunteers and guides* sub category is comprised of three properties. The *general* property suggests *volunteers and guides* as important **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. The property is minimally supported, represented across two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units of the *general* property include:

In our case in Western Australia in nearly all instances they are volunteers / But certainly throughout Western Australia they are all volunteers / I mean our people know that that these volunteers are linked partly / That is run by a our volunteer guides / it is comprised of this subgroup which is the volunteer group.

The second property is termed *volunteers our block*. This property suggest *volunteers* as a factor which negatively impact on customer focus. Dimensions of this property pertain to negative attributions of volunteers, for example *don't want to see change* and *seeing themselves doing the old role rather than the new role*.

The third property is termed *volunteers our valuable resource*. This property suggest *volunteers* as a factor which positively impact on customer focus. Dimensions of this property pertain to positive attributions of volunteers, for example *volunteers are always customer orientated even if they don't recognise it* and *doing it out of the goodness of their heart*.

While *volunteers* are referred to in two data sets, all negative attributions of *volunteers* are represented within one data set and all positive attributions are represented within the other. This suggests although *volunteers* are an essential **factors impacting on customer focus**, within organisations they are viewed in either a *positive* or *negative* light.

Illustrative thought units of the *volunteers our block* property include:

That's our block. Would you say so I / A conservative organisation / no just let me also make that point that this organisation is over 55 female, extremely conservative and extremely well educated / and who also don't want to see change in Kings Park period / and the last thing they want to see is change in their own group as well / they can keep going back to their constitution and saying well we're not going to change / we don't have to its in our constitution / so we are concerned they may not be as fully relevant to the visitor as we would like / yet our volunteer services are seeing themselves as botanic garden guides [old role], not tourist information people [new role] / They're not answerable to management / It's just that the volunteer has the choice of whether they want to do that or they don't want to do that.

Illustrative thought units of the *volunteers our valuable resource* property include:

They are always customer orientated even if they don't recognise it / if we allow this valuable resource to be lost to us / You know there doing it out of the goodness of their heart / All you've got is that tenuous bond of their desire to offer a service to their community / You can't, you've got no hold over them / you've got no relationship with them, employee-employer/ master-servant / because of their desire to do community service / if there is no one out there to help you fight the fire on your farm its going to go.

- *Management culture and role* sub category

Management culture and role, as a sub category, is comprised of two categories termed *various* and *management behaviour as customers*.

Dimensions of the *various* property are numerous reflecting a diversity in meaning of *management culture and role* amongst respondents. No clear picture emerges as to what the *management culture and role* is. Rather, the data contains numerous perspectives from *working for the organisation, the job means my family life suffers to treating all staff as equals*. The sub category is important to the extent that it suggests the *management culture and role* as being distinct to other members of the organisation.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

So I see first of all the key is really the ingredient of the and the culture in which they operating / You know, I accepted this job means that my family life suffers / Because you, you know work in the organisation and you like to see the organisation progress and not regress and stagnate / I have a strong public sector ideology / I don't want to work in the private sector / and where standards of sloppy customer service happen you deal with it / and I'll use staff/ volunteers sort of interchanged / because I have the same views that what I expect of staff I'd expect of a volunteer / your accepted as an equal / he said he really appreciate it, this is the first time I've been invited into this

building for morning tea / and within a week when it came up in a number of meetings I just said 'I'm sorry, we do not have Joe citizens, we do not have the unwashed - and we will call them the visitor' / they [customers] are the most vital person, people, and they are people, human beings like you and I / I have to make sure that this organisation plays ethically.

The *management behaviour as customers* property pertains to responses illustrating the way managers behaviour as customers. These responses strongly relate to properties and dimensions of *customer behaviour/ability* as described under category 7 - **customers factors impacting on customer focus** and *customer awareness* as described under category 3- **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

The *management behaviour as customers* property is minimally supported, represented across one data set. It is important to the extent the data suggests *management behaviour as customers* is in a manner which respondents describe as a *negative* type of *customer behaviour/ability* (see under category 7 - **customer factors impacting on customer focus**). This in turn relates to a low level commitment to *knowing what service providers do* as described in category 3- **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. For example, the data suggests that when in need of a service, managers will approach an organisation even though they don't know whether the type of service required is actually provided. Further, prior to seeking a service, managers don't look at the organisations customer charter to establish whether or not the service required is provided. In other words, *management behaviour as customers* demonstrates a lack of awareness in *knowing what other service providers do*.

Illustrative thought units for the *management behaviour as customers* property include:

I don't look at a charter when I ring up a contact or even somebody I don't know in that organisation. I simply go to an individual with a problem / What's the difference between the standards commission and PSMO / I think they do! I think they ran a customer service, they ran the complaint management thing.

- *Relationships* sub category

Relationships, as a sub category, is minimally supported, represented across five of the six data sets. It is strongly related to the property of the same name in category 3 **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. Both sub categories suggest customer focus as pertaining to a type of *relationship*. The sub categories are located under different categories as *relationships* are associated either with customers

(customer understanding of ourselves as providers), or amongst staff (this category).

Relationships is comprised of two properties, with varying dimensions. *Internal customer focus/association with your staff/teamwork* is the most supported property. It pertains to responses suggesting *spending time* and *talking with the front line staff* as important elements in developing *relationships*. Associated with these responses are Top Management Teams perceptions of how Workers perceive management in terms of customer focus. The data on Top Management Team perceptions of Worker perceptions of management's customer focus is expressed more in negative terms. This is illustrated in the following quotations. *But they [Workers] don't probably see management as customer focused as it ought to be and because they [Workers] don't think they are their customers, they [Workers] would probably say that management is not as customer focused as it ought to be.*

Illustrative thought units for the *internal customer focus association with your staff teamwork* property include:

I think that's the internal part of customer focus, relationship with your clients / that you have an association / And as I say, the next step in that is an internal customer issue / And you've got to be working as a team / There is now much more of a team bonding amongst the staff.

The property *internal customer focus association with your staff teamwork* also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the *internal customer focus association with your staff teamwork* property include:

You know the person from within the organisation is as important a customer / I mean that's what we're there for, trying to get that concept across so we have been doing a bit of work there.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *internal customer focus association with your staff teamwork* property include:

I think that's probably the one thing to, is that I probably don't, well I don't really get that much time I think to go and spend time with perhaps the front line staff and things like that / I don't get very much time to talk to staff / because you know they [Workers] don't think they are their customers so they would probably say that management is not as customer focused as it ought to be / But they [Workers] don't probably see management as customer focused as it ought to be / But then those people up stairs, they don't really deal with customers all the time / Not just because we take our emphasis off consumers and put it more onto traders but simply because we're not there

answering the phones, we're not there dealing with the real people / there is a disunity amongst the organisation.

Having positive feeling, as a property, is related in the data to the notion of *relationships*. *Having positive feeling* includes the dimensions *warm and fuzzies*, *being comfortable* and *moving on*. In other words, the data suggests a relationship between *feelings* staff have from delivering services and the phenomenon of customer focus. The property is minimally supported, represented in only two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units of the *having positive feeling* property include:

Why shouldn't you have good feelings about that and so / Ah, yes well I've had several really nice warm and fuzzies. I suppose' you could call it that / I reckon, it doesn't matter what you do, its better to get positive feedback than negative feedback / now becoming quite comfortable with the system / they were comfortable with what they had / and getting things done / I perhaps want to add one thing to that is that, that success in those sorts of things / helps you to move on / So that's really helped us move on a bit.

The property *having positive feeling* also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *having positive feeling* property include:

You know, if you want to get your rocks off for a bloody warm and fuzzy from this joint your going to be a bit hard pressed.

- *Involvement and commitment* sub category

The *involvement and commitment* sub category is comprised of two properties, termed *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts/staff commitment* and *not involving staff*. Both properties are similar in that they contain responses pertaining to consultation and involvement. The two properties are distinguished from one another in that *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts staff commitment* means *staff involvement and commitment*, while *not involving staff* means excluding *staff involvement and commitment*.

Involvement and commitment is strongly related to sub categories of the same name in category 2 - **attitudes towards customers** and category 3 - **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The sub categories are concerned with the notions of consultation, involvement and communication. The sub categories are located under different categories as the *involvement and commitment* is associated

either with customers (category 2 - **attitudes towards customers**), systems and methods of consultation and communication (category 3 - **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**) or staff (this category).

Illustrative thought units for the *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts/staff commitment* property include:

And the commitment was discussed at last years conference / we sought their input / most of which we were collecting on what their thoughts in relationship to it / I think what's happened is that there has been a process whereby everybody in the organisation has had a chance decide what we do and more to the point, what we don't do / We had representatives from each division and also from the volunteers / had representatives out in each branch in it / and it wasn't just a manager / once a year all of our 40 staff across Western Australia get together / Then we had sort of several meetings in relation to what should be happening / now how are you guys helping us to get there / And each department has to come up with how they are achieving those aims / you need to contribute to the well being of the organisation / it was actually developed of course in consultation with staff.

The property *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts staff commitment* also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts/staff commitment* property include:

So I think sometimes internally we don't tend to take quite as much time / and not quite as much effort into the internal communications as we do with the external communications / You know, you become flippant.

Illustrative thought units for the *not involving all staff* property include:

Because we felt we had too many clients / so if we put all them on our council that's all we would of had would have been that yelling / and that's obvious those who don't want to be part of it.

The sub category is minimally supported, represented across all data sets. The *seeking staff input/collecting staff thoughts/staff commitment* property is more strongly represented than the *not involving all staff* property.

- *Staff/compartment of our people* sub category.

The *staff compartment of our people* sub category is comprised of two categories termed *various* and *staff factors attributable to good service*. The property is minimally supported, represented across five of the six data sets.

Dimensions of the *various* property are numerous reflecting a diversity in Top Management Team perspectives towards Worker attributes that influence customer focus. Worker attributes that are perceived to influence customer focus include *different personalities, award conditions, morale, length of service, Worker commitment, Worker perceptions of who the customer are, myths, ability to listen to people* and the view that *Workers are not well paid*.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

The comportment of our people / I mean there are different personalities but you would get that in any organisation / Its only a personality issue, as far as content / I mean there's one particular person who I want name, whose comes across as a little prick but to his credit he's always got the right answers and he comes back / The Workers themselves are used to working to their award or were used to working to their award / but within that award they were customer responsive / So, like your in a war zone, your a reasonable tight unit / you might be fighting the wrong enemy but that doesn't matter / But is the word morale the key to that / but terribly loyal for whatever reasons to the organisation / They just love this park Totally dedicated / They are quite committed / so its a very stable group of people / average length of service is around 10 to 15 years / not well paid / They don't get the overtime / They (staff) just don't see it like that and its a problem, they wouldn't see the Minister as a customer is the sense that I do I suppose / they [Workers] really resent the time and effort that goes into supporting the minister and providing briefing notes and providing answers to parliamentary questions and things like that / and it was part of a myth / There is I think a strong feeling that if they (country staff) stop doing this Rolls Royce service that everyone will jump up and down. / The ability to listen / the ability to change the way you work / and then you working, your use to working with people / Of course its like personal likes and dislikes.

The second property of the *staff/comportment of our people* sub category is termed *staff factors attributable to good service*. This property is strongly related to the *various* property above, however in this instance, the attributes of Workers are explicitly related to good service. There is only one dimension to the property. This dimension is concerned with the notion of *staff flexibility*.

Illustrative thought units for the *staff factors attributable to good service* property include:

So the flexibility process of our staff has been critical / oh shit, you know we're in the theatrical business now / You're not a horticulturist tonight, your a theatrical stagehand, your a parking attendant / and you know the Interceptor magazine picked up on that [flexibility] in the latest issue.

- *Structure* sub category

Structure, as a sub category, is comprised of two properties termed *general* and *divisions are very separate*. The sub category is minimally supported. Both properties contain responses concerning the formal organisational structure. The data suggests, to a minimal extent, organisation structure as a *factor impacting on customer focus*.

Although the sub category is only minimally supported, the property *divisions are very separate* is more strongly represented than the *general* property.

Illustrative thought units of the *general* property include:

So the structure of the organisation / What they don't understand is that in today's world most volunteer organisations are under the umbrella of management / and they are also answerable within their guidelines to management's final decision / at the same time I wasn't responsible for these guys / they weren't in my divisional structure.

Illustrative thought units of the *divisions are very separate* property include:

In the respect of our divisions are very separate in many ways, aren't they / I look after all the public utilities, the public areas so I have my own horticultural staff / So there's three active divisions in the broader external roles / I come from a corporate services environment.

General comment on organisational factors impacting on customer focus category

Appearing throughout the data are a number of **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. *Resources and capacity* is the most represented factor. Overall, the data suggests participating organisations *do not have the capacity to deliver* the services demanded of them. *Volunteers and guides* is the next most represented factor, along with *management culture and role*. *Volunteers and guides* are referred to in differing contexts as either a *block* or a *valuable resource*. The data on *management culture and role* suggests this organisational group as having a distinct *culture and role* from other organisational members. *Staff comportment of our people, involvement and commitment*, and *relationships* are minimally represented throughout the data as *organisational factors which impact on customer focus*. *Structure* is the least represented factor, with the most represented property being *divisions are very separate*.

APPENDIX 7

THICK DESCRIPTIONS OF WORKER CATEGORIES AND SUB CATEGORIES

Chapter five provided an overview of the emergent categories and sub categories derived from analysis of the Worker data. The grounding of categories, sub categories, properties and dimensions from the data are detailed following.

Conventions used

Conventions used in presenting categories, sub categories, properties and dimensions are as follows.

- Bold type indicates category names.
- Italic type indicates sub category, property, and dimension, names.
- Words/phrases in single quotes indicates theme titles.
- Words/phrases in 10 point type indicate direct quotes from the data.
- Words in [] indicate author additions.

Category 1 - Structure of customer focus

Structure of customer focus as a category is comprised of six sub categories. Each sub category is strongly represented throughout all data sets. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 7.1 details the sub categories and properties for the **structure of customer focus** category.

TABLE 7.1: Summary of Findings for the Structure of Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Servicing	Providing, offering a service
	Helping/assisting/looking after/ supporting customers
	Providing the best possible service/giving customers a good experience
	Meeting customer expectations/focusing on the customer needs and wants
Service types	Various
	What customers need from us/people come here for different reasons
Standards and performance indicators	Various
	Creating a good image/providing an appropriate environment for the customers
	Meeting our commitments to customers/don't lie to customers
Processes/systems/methods	The way we treat customers/dealing with customers
	Matching/aligning what is produced with what is required
	Interaction with customers/talking to customers
	Treating people the way you would expect to be treated
End result/outcomes	Self
	Other
	Win-win
Assessment of performance	Positive
	Negative
	Yes-no/up to a certain extent/ trying to improve
	Difficult to say

- *Servicing* sub category

The *servicing* sub category is comprised of four properties. Dimensions of these properties are wide ranging reflecting the diversity in meaning of *servicing* amongst respondents.

Properties and dimensions of the *servicing* sub category pertain to two themes. These themes relate to *servicing* either 'self interests' or 'others interests'. The *servicing* 'self interests' theme is generated from data grouped under the *providing, offering a service* property. No relationship is made between *servicing* and customer expectations or needs. *Servicing* in this sense takes on the meaning of doing a job or

task. This is strongly illustrated in the dimensions *providing services the provider likes* and *leading customers to areas*. On the whole, this property is not well supported, represented across four of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *servicing* 'self interests' theme include:

Customer Focus means providing a service // I don't know, its providing a service // Customer Focus. I guess that the direction of the people working in the institution should be towards providing a service // Its just a general concept I suppose. of, service an audience or the public // to serve the customer // Providing a service to our customers // Well its really just offering a service, you know // Public service - public service as in service to the public, not public sector as such // I guess the service that we provide to the public // I still go back to where we have relied too much on our curators to put up the show to what they like // and not to what the customer is looking for // or leading them [customers] into an area where they can understand what they are being shown.

The *servicing* 'others interests' theme is generated from data associating service delivery with customer expectations or customer needs. Also grouped under the 'others interests' theme are responses that associate positive evaluations to the *servicing* provided. Positive evaluations of *servicing* include *best service* and *good experiences*. Customer expectations and needs, along with positive evaluations, are viewed as strongly related with service provision. *Servicing* in this sense takes on the meaning of doing a job or task in context of customer expectations or needs. The job or task, in the words of Workers, is expressed as *helping, assisting, looking after and supporting*.

The 'others interests' theme includes the three properties, *helping/assisting/looking after/supporting customers, providing the best possible service giving customers a good experience, and meeting customer expectations focusing on the customer needs and wants*. Collectively the three properties are well support by the data, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *servicing* 'others interests' theme include,

- for the *helping/assisting/looking after/supporting customers* property:

Being able to assist people and help them [customers] // Customer focus means to me, helping everybody // to provide them or to assist them with whatever assistance they might need // And being there to help people // being able to sort maybe help them or assist them in receiving that sort of desired outcome // We care for their basic needs // Well that's one aspect, also offering - looking after them // in helping volunteers do the job they do // Well it means looking after the customers.

- for the *providing the best possible service/giving customers a good experience* property:

And giving them a good experience // Customer focus means to be able to give a good service // That's what it means to me, giving out the right information to my clients // and giving them a good experience // Providing the best service to my customers // then our role is to try and provide the best information.

- for the *meeting customer expectations/focusing on the customer needs and wants* property:

Servicing other areas' needs, basically to me yeah // Well just to, it depends on what the customers come to see and deliver it // but still also be sensitive to their needs // Focusing on the customer's needs and wants // Buts it does include servicing their needs // Yeah, being able to respond to all needs that the public needs // Presenting to the people what the people are asking for // Providing what the public wants // I guess its focusing on what needs to be delivered in a customer service situation // To me its, Customer Focus is meeting the customers needs that's what it sort of says to me // Customer Focus means to me that the people who come to us as visitors get a very high amount of - what they are actually asking for // Meeting our customers needs and perceptions of needs // to supply your external customers with what they need basically // and the programs that we construct to suit their needs // I suppose just giving them what they really want when they ring // Doing whatever they require mate // It's basically answering their needs in any way that I am equipped to do so.

- *Service types* sub category

Service types, as a sub category, is comprised of two properties, *various* and *what customers need from us/people come here for different reasons*. Both properties are comprised of numerous dimensions which indicate the wide range of service provided by participating organisations. The sub category is strongly supported, represented across all data sets.

The two properties of the *service types* sub category are distinguished from one another on the basis of themes that the responses emerge as pertaining to. Dimensions of the *various* property emerge as pertaining to a 'self interests' theme. The dimensions are said to suggest a 'self interests' theme as the *service types* pertain to doing a job or task. Responses suggesting a 'self interests' theme in the sense of doing a job or task include *services we give them* and *facilities we provide*. In other words, *service types* from a 'self interests' sense pertain to what respondents perceive as the role or task that they are required to perform from an organisational perspective.

The indicative range of service types for the 'self interests' theme are illustrated in the following thought units.

Attracting quality exhibitions // and that general day to day running of things // Well that covers a wide range of things because we deal with by-law infringements // I mean I am part of visitor services // Our facilities as far as the picnic areas and guided walks // On walks throughout the bushland // Well because of what we are - we are a Park, a recreational facility // and we offer our grounds, our Parks // maintaining the park lands // I think their always, the Brigade is putting up applications for various fire appliances and things like that // the Ministry main areas of licencing, conciliation and compliance // you know you process applications // you provide information // your assisting in getting what's required to get their licence up and running // because we are actually an advisory service to all of the Local Governments that are responsible for our 16,000 odd volunteers // like producing a volunteer magazine, say once a quarter or once every 4 months // and developing programs and so on so that the public can access it // And we've had concerts in down in the botanic garden // I mean the programs that we put on // by offering lectures and things like that // I work in the HR section so every day people have queries in regards to their leave // while we're basically payroll and personnel // but we also provide a Corporate Service structure for three other departments // and we fix whatever we are required to fix // We run a records management section down stairs // the movement of papers and file creation, for Treasury // and they put their argument across and we have to respond to that // and dealing with people who aren't happy about things // so we are responsible for dealing with complaints // It also means dealing with enquiries // So that we can respond to phone calls, vandalism, graffiti, vehicle break-ins // you know we provide -we're involved in providing displays and information and so on // providing advice, and this is what we're all about is providing advice, to anybody who approaches us // giving out the right information // I have lots to do with that because part of my job is providing advice to other people in the Gallery // and whereas my team for instance, just supports the others // and then the other thing is that we are custodians of collections of objects, paintings and other things // because we have that sort of responsibility // I mean obviously there is the conservation and the preservation and the research aspects.

Dimensions of the *what customers need from us/people come here for different reasons* property emerge as pertaining to a 'others interests' theme. The dimensions are said to pertain to a 'others interests' theme as the *service types* pertain to Workers perceptions of what customers need or want. Responses suggesting a 'others interests' theme from the perspective of what customers need or want include *people who come specifically to look at engines and customers want to widen their horizons*. In other words, *service types* from a 'others interests' sense pertain to what respondents perceive as customers needs or wants.

Illustrative thought units for *service types* of the 'others interests' theme include:

Others are coming as a school groups, they come to learn, they come for information // for people to learn more about nature, and social and cultural history // You have tourists coming through and don't know much about the area, wanting to pick up something about that // we have people who come specifically to look at engines and so on // who are seeking information on various things // when they are seeking information or assistance or anything like that // and then its just a matter of them

wanting to receive information / Well obviously people come to us because they have a problem // I mean some people come here to roll away an afternoon // their not really coming for anything I guess // customers want to widen their horizons. being the type of place we are // People in our particular set-up ask for information // basically people always come up to you and ask what things are and what they'd like to see // So you get a lot of tourist who want to see wildflowers so // but as far as the Park that most of the general public know, its a place where they come to enjoy and have their picnics and BBQ's and look over the Swan River and take their photographs.

Although the *service types* sub category is strongly supported, represented across all categories, dimensions of the 'others interests' theme are only minimally supported.

- *Standards and performance indicators* sub category

Standards and performance indicators, as a sub category, contains three properties termed *various*, *creating a good image/providing an appropriate environment for the customers* and *meeting our commitments to customers/don't lie to customers*.

Standards and performance indicators vary depending upon the nature of the service, the type of client need and perceived performance standards.

The *various* property is comprised of numerous dimensions which underpin the wide range of *standards and performance indicators* applied by participating organisations. Dimensions vary from more technical, quantitative *standards and performance indicators* including *meeting deadlines, this is the way things are done around here* and *responding to letters in seven days* to more social, qualitative *standards and performance indicators* including *person to person contact, being friendly, being an approachable person* and *creating a good image for our customers*.

The diversity of *standards and performance indicators* for the *various* property are illustrated in the following Worker thought units.

The standards that we want to achieve or that we expect of ourselves // Well to my mind, customer focus means providing a satisfactory service, a timely service, an accurate service // Providing a quick, reliable, service to more or less recognised clients needs // Well basically it means to me giving a customer, the most accurate information that an office, or a division can give them // and its dealt with straight away // and get back to them, get back to them within a certain amount of time // You know if I say I am going ring you back today, well we better get back today // its following up when people are questioning you, ask for information // its very much output all the time // how we're meant to have a neat uniform and keep it neat // how we should respond to letters written to the Park within 7 days and this sort of thing // and you have to be knowledgeable in what you are saying // You have to be confident and knowledgeable so that your information is accurate and is correct // Making sure that all the facilities are working that we have available and cleanliness // so that perhaps if you have an enquiry, the deadline that they have requested is met // in a quick and efficient and consistent manner // If you have got an important deadline to meet // Well, just generally you have to be an approachable type of person // You have

to have good public relations in how to speak to people without being patronizing or presumptuous - anything like that // so I think that's really, really important, either the information officer or the attendant being friendly and helpful to that person // you should be able to give the answer in a diplomatic way, standard way // you can not just be abrupt with them. That what's I look at it, customer focus // We try to explain to them this is way things are done around here // this is the way we have to deal with it // We've got formats and policies we must follow // but we're got guidelines, we've got the thesaurus and stuff like that // Is the environment that we're providing appropriate for what they need // and having a better image to the public // and really want to make the Gallery an attractive and pleasant place // that we come over as customer friendly // and to give people something nice // I think by responding positively to my customers.

The *various* property includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the *various* property include:

There are enough signs out there // you walk out in the bushlands, then there are signs out there to help you // direct you, tell you how far this is or where you are // and she got through to me and it was answered in about five minutes.

Illustrative examples of explicit negative evaluations for the *various* property include:

Well I mean I have people ringing me saying that they have been trying to get through to someone // and they haven't returned their calls // and you know I had a lady last week she said ' I have been trying to get this out of the Gallery for over fifteen months' // because the way the buildings are at the moment its not very clear [the building is a museum] // and a lot of people miss it.

A further dimension to the *standards and performance indicators* sub category concerns responses grouped under the property *ridiculous standards*. A theme emerging in the data concerns standards imposed by Top Management Teams in implementing customer focus as being *ridiculous*. A dimension of this property is *picking up the phone within 5 rings*. This dimension emerged under the *various* property, however is also grouped under *ridiculous standards* as in certain contexts, the *standard of picking up the phone within 5 rings* is linked with an explicit negative evaluation.

Illustrative thought units of the *ridiculous standards* property include:

I mean they bring out ridiculous things // and is really starting to put the pressure on in terms of work and all that type of stuff // like pick up the phone within 5 rings.

The remaining property *meeting our commitments to customers don't lie to customers* is also comprised of a number of dimensions. It is distinguished from the *various* property on the basis that dimensions of *meeting our commitments to*

customers/don't lie to customers pertain to not only talking *standards and performance indicators* but also following up so that the *standards and performance indicators* are actually provided.

Illustrative thought units for the *meeting our commitments to customers/don't lie to customers* property include:

If we say we're going to do something, we've got to do it // we follow up what we're going to do; and b we meet what they expect us to do // The first one is that we meet our commitments to our customers // so that if we give them a commitment - we're going to do something // The main thing that I believe in is you don't lie to them // you tell them the truth in all cases // we've got a map and we've gotta actually do it // and we also respond to their requests, which are reasonable, within a given time-frame // if we say we are going to respond to all letters within 7 working days, make sure we've got to do that.

- *Processes/systems/methods* sub category

The *processes/systems/methods* sub category is comprised of four properties, termed *the way we treat customers/dealing with customers*, *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required*, *interaction with customers talking to customers* and *treating people the way you would expect to be treated*. The sub category is well supported, represented across all data sets.

The *the way we treat customers/dealing with customers* property contains various dimensions of *processes/systems/methods* for the customer focus phenomenon. Dimensions vary and at times emerge as conflicting. For example, the dimension *treating customers the same* appears to conflict with the dimension *not treating customers the same*. This contradiction emerges most strongly in the dimension *knowing there should be equal service for all customers but externals are considered a bit more important*.

Also grouped under the *the way we treat customers/dealing with customers* property are dimensions pertaining to *ways of individually dealing with customers in certain instances* and *ways of calming down aggressive customers*. This includes *making eye contact with the customers to change them so that they become friendly* and *let the customer get the anger off their chest/step back and let the customer unload*.

Illustrative thought units of the *way we treat customers/dealing with customers* property include:

Just to deal with the public // The way we treat our customers // Its just how you approach the people over at the counter or on the other end of the phone // and just coming to each person as a new person, not as a collective // Gets treated the same as any other person, be they a trader or consumer // I know there should be equal service to all clients // To me everybody, we are supposed to be looking at everyone as being equal across the board // So it comes down to, we're providing a different standard of service throughout the State rather than an equal standard // well there's two ways of handling them // and then when they've calmed down, usually they calm down // there are always ways to get around // trying to get over and sort of put that forward that image even though you are feeling a little bit lousy // you sort of make this contact then they change, they sort of become friendly // even those that may come in and for some reason got out of bed the wrong side and are agro // My own personal response to that always is to think well I'm at least going out in a while and I don't have to deal with you [the customer] tonight // But you don't take it personally, you let them get it off their chest // by the time they've got it off their chest, and then you can start talking to them // I understand that they're not directing it at me personally // but I'll just take a step back and let them unload.

The *way we treat customers/dealing with customers* property includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. These negative evaluations pertain principally to contexts whereby respondents feel they *have to please difficult customers*.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the *way we treat customers/dealing with customers* property include:

I suppose if there is anything, you don't want to have to please difficult people // and your always having to get - you know to be confrontational // and to try to overcome those people that - who set out to be contrary or difficult to handle // They are the negative parts // I think just some times you want to have the ability to say "look, see you later, we can't do anything for you".

The *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required* property pertains to *processes/systems/methods* in the sense of *servicing* 'others interests'. The data suggests customer focus in terms of *processes/systems/methods* requires *matching* or *aligning* what the organisations do with *customer needs* or *expectations*.

Illustrative thought units for the *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required* property include:

And therefore we need to look at what they want // Customer Focus means always looking at what the customer wants in what we do // So identifying who the customers are specifically, what their needs are and aligning our outputs to that // Customer focus means aligning // in my perception means aligning the organisations objectives with identified key recipients of any outputs //and trying to make what is being produced match what is required .

The *interaction with customers/talking to customers* property pertains to more social aspects of organising in terms of *consultation, communication and relationships*. As with the *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required* property, dimensions of *interaction with customers/talking to customers* pertain to *servicing* in the sense of 'others interests'. For example, *negotiation with customers when they need things, listening to customers and dealing one-to-one with customers*, all pertain to social aspects of *processes/systems/methods*. The dimensions *working with customers, chatting to customers, and asking customers why they are here*, illustrate how this *servicing* in the sense of 'others interests' is achieved. An over riding sense gained from this property is that *processes/systems/methods* align with the more social *standards and performance indicators* in the sense they aim to *service* 'others interests'.

Illustrative thought units for the *interaction with customers/talking to customers* property include:

The interaction with the public, talking to people // And so we're just there to listen, listening, take an interest and pass information or comments on to the curators // You deal with the same person all the time, that same person just thinks their doing the right thing although it wrong // Well to me just being able to get out there everyday and meet them // And on a one to one basis // Well I think the best aspects in one area is the one-on-one // I probably haven't thought too much about customer focus, its probably more of a case of just carrying procedures and duties that have been implemented probably through customer focus // Well making them feel comfortable // And then its a matter of you putting it across to the client in such a way that they understand and they go away happy // ensuring that if there are any delays we have to communicate with them // And I guess that's where I say communication is one of the key factors from my perspective // giving them something entertaining maybe or amusing or something pleasant // and they have been given all the information that they possibly can // so that they find out even more than they actually ask for and things like that // And the relationship you have with an external client tends to be provided at all costs // whereas if you are servicing internal clients then there is a bit more negotiation goes on about what they need and when they need it // We do a little bit extra than everyone else // If I'm faced with a question that I personally don't know the answer to, then I would go and source out other people // If I don't have the information, trying to get somebody that I can put them through to that can help them best they can // If we don't answer them within 7 days and it hasn't been to the right person, it gets sent onto somebody else // and when there are questions are asked that they don't know the answer to, we work behind the scenes to make sure that they get those answers // you have to be able to maintain good rapport with them // it means welcoming people to the museum // which may entail chatting to them // asking them why they are here.

The sense of a social aspect to *processes/systems/methods* as pertaining to *servicing* 'others interests' is reinforced in the fourth property of the *processes/systems/methods* sub category, *treating people the way you would expect to be treated*. The property suggests *processes/systems/methods* of customer focus requires Workers to think

about service delivery in a relational context from the perspective of the customer. This property is weakly supported, represented in only two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *treating people the way you would expect to be treated* property include:

I know what it's like when I'm on the receiving end and I'm the customer // It means treating people as you would like to be treated // Probably of treating people the way they would like to be treated themselves // So well if you can always bear that in mind as to what would you expect if you were making the inquiry or your seeking assistance or you've come here for help of whatever // what sort of level of service and reaction and response would you expect.

- *End result/outcomes* sub category

End result/outcomes sub category relates to the *standards and performance indicators* sub category. This relationship is drawn on the basis of the similarity in dimensions across the two sub categories.

Three themes are identified in the *end result/outcomes* sub category, which are used as the property label headings. Properties pertain to either an *outcome end result* for the organisation - the *self* property, customers - the *others* property, or for both customers and the organisation, the *win-win* property. The *self* property is the most supported, represented across all data sets. The *others* property is minimally supported, also represented across all data sets. The *win-win* property is weakly supported, represented in three of the six data sets.

Dimensions to the properties of the *end result/outcomes* sub category are wide ranging reflecting the diversity in services provided by participating organisations. Dimensions for the *self* property vary from *being highly regarded by the community* and *being recognised as an organisation that is able to be approached*, to *having a good reputation* and *having staff feeling that they are contributing to something important* as illustrated by the following thought units:

A better PR recognition // you've got to be recognised as an organisation or even on a personal level, as people who are able to be approached // and that in turn reflects, it is like a domino effect // and it will ripple through the community // With an agency like us, it gives us a good reputation throughout the community // In a business, ultimately the benefits come back to you because you can reap profits from all the good that is done // I mean if you are in a private part of enterprise, if you give good customer service people will come back to you and it increases your revenue // If you provide the information that people want then they are able to do their job better // A certain degree of satisfaction if you do it right // and looking to, at job satisfaction // You take

a lot of the stress out of the job for yourself // if you get it right, I think the fact that you can do your job in an enjoyable manner.

Dimensions for the *others* property vary from *making customers happy with the service* and *customers can enjoy the park* as illustrated by the following thought units:

A customer that is delighted with, not just satisfied or happy with it, but absolutely delighted with your service compared to others // thrilled people // and the clients are happy and satisfied // and is always trying to make the best to make the customer happy // but its rewarding to think that you are providing a service that the customer wants // so that they [customers] can enjoy the park.

Dimensions for the *win-win* property vary from *negotiation of outcomes with a win-win situation* to *to the satisfaction of us and the customer* as illustrated by the following thought units:

But it is more or less trying to satisfactorily negotiation of outcomes with a win-win situation // how do you say, in a satisfactory, to the satisfaction of all parties // which means us and the customer. That's how I look at it // because we are, well we hopefully we're doing the right thing by everybody // I think its the support you get at the end if you're meeting your customers expectations then they'll support you in the future.

- *Assessment of performance* sub category

The *assessment of performance* sub category pertains to data indicating respondents perceptions of overall performance to customer focus. The sub category is strongly supported and represented across all data sets. Four properties to the sub category emerge. The properties pertain to *positive* and *negative* perceptions of performance. A third property groups perceptions pertaining to *yes-no up to a certain extent/ trying to improve*. The fourth property groups response pertaining to *difficult to say*.

The *positive* property is the most supported response, represented across all data sets. The *yes-no/up to a certain extent/ trying to improve* property is the next most supported property, also represented across all data sets. The *negative* property is minimally represented across all data sets, with *difficult to say* being the least supported property.

Dimensions to the properties of this sub category are wide ranging, suggesting differences in perceptions on how well or poorly organisations are performing, in addition to perceptions on where organisations are trying to improve. A strongly represented dimension of the *yes-no/up to a certain extent/ trying to improve* property are responses that suggest individually respondents perceive themselves as being customer focused, but not fellow Workers.

Illustrative thought units for the *positive* property include:

Generally I would // I would have thought so // I am happy with your attitude and things like that // I am happy with the institution as a whole // In education, we have a very strong sense of customers // I've been here 29 years and I would say we always have been, but we probably didn't realise it as customer focus // So I would say in all the time I've been here, we always have been that way but we perhaps wasn't formalised // as I say 95 percent of our clients are happy with our service // And yeah, if we weren't doing our job, they [customers] wouldn't be there I don't think // They were happy with the way we react to any situation // But overall they say we give a good service // I think I would say yes // Definitely // I think we put in a really good effort, to serve our customers and that // So from my point of view, I feel that that it is working in the institution // Because they are very aware of it // They are aware that they are here to serve // we provide a very good public, a good service to the public // because we have what I think is a strong customer focus in our department // I think that it can be for the working down there - they are all very capable of handing out customer services // We have, I believe, a very good image throughout the arts public.

Illustrative thought units for the *negative* property include:

The quality has dropped right away // And I haven't seen a lot of different things here this year // I think we lack the overall bloody, we don't have a goal or mission which to focus on // I think that's where - the problem is everything is ad hoc and never finalised // There are those that don't understand what, first don't understand who the key customers are // then they don't understand their needs and don't know how to satisfy them // but they could be doing much better // I think there is a long way to go // Not completely, no // No, I wouldn't // No. The biggest percentage I would say no // I do not feel it has // where the other groups who are, don't deal with the public, prefer not to deal with the public and yet part of their role is actually, I would have said, disseminating information.

Illustrative thought units of the *yes-no/up to a certain extent/ trying to improve* property include:

To some extent, yes // in some areas I think we service our customers very well and in other areas we service our customers very poorly // So I'd hang half a sign out // Certain aspects of it yes // I think they are trying very hard to be // But I think we are doing better than we used to // its partially there // I'd think its fair to say that we actually try to be fairly responsive and flexible // Where you are getting a much more positive feedback from the public // and we're getting a greater response from the public // but not between ourselves, not internally no // internally we have still got a lot of problems // But the Administration side - I'd just say no // Yes and no, but if you had the reverse question and asked our consumers, they'd say 'no' // but there are people or departments in this Gallery who are not particularly customer orientated // and I think improvements could be made there.

Illustrative thought units of the *difficult to say* property include:

Well we claim to be, whether they are or not though // Whether that's being done or not I don't know // That's a very hard question // I can't comment on that one // I can't really comment // Like I said previously, when people are coming in, we don't know.

no-one knows // because I'm not sure that the Ministry has done a full survey to ensure that we are meeting customer needs // because there is no evidence to show to me that we are meeting those customer needs // But at this stage I wouldn't know if I could put that label on // because, I mean its hard for me // its a very difficult sort of judgments // because I'm not side by side with them.

General comment on the structure of customer focus category

A picture is emerging of customer focus as pertaining to *servicing* from two points of view, termed 'self interests' and 'others interests'. *Servicing* in context of a 'self interests' theme is related to *service types* talked about in terms of a type of job or task. *Servicing* in context of a 'others interests' theme is related to *service types* talked about from a perceived customer perspective. *Servicing* 'others interests' emerges as strongly related to *processes/systems/methods* in terms of *matching/aligning what is produced with what is required, interaction with customers/talking to customers* and *treating people the way you would expect to be treated*.

Category 2 - Attitudes towards customers

Attitudes towards customers as a category is compromised of four sub categories. Sub categories are represented across the data to varying degrees. Each sub category is defined by a number of properties. Table 7.2 details the sub categories and properties for the **attitudes towards customers** category.

TABLE 7.2: Summary of Findings for the Attitudes Towards Customers Category

Sub category	Property
Customer awareness	Not having to deal with people on the outside
	Having a client/putting the customer first
	Knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are
	Viewing ourselves through the customers eyes/thinking what the customer wants as part of doing things
	Considering the customer rather than the service/running the place according to who your customers are
Commitment to change	Greater commitment to the customer
	Always looking to improve things/get the best results with all aspects
	Adjusting to customers ways of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer
	Changing our focus
Involvement	Coming from the customers/involvement with the community/leaning towards what the customer wants
	We depend on our customers
	We are not finding out what the customer wants/customers should be happy to see what he sees
Mindsets/ attitudes	Tokenistic things/customer focus groups are a waste of time things
	The attitudinal thing/believing in what you do
	Bureaucratic/ public service mentality

Overall, the category is minimally supported across the data. *Customer awareness* and *commitment to change* are the most supported sub categories, represented across all data sets. *Involvement* and *mindsets/attitudes* are weakly supported, both represented across five data sets.

- *Customer awareness* sub category

The five properties of the *customer awareness* sub category pertain to two themes. These themes relate to types of attitudes; labeled 'closed attitude' and 'open attitude'.

The 'closed attitude' theme is generated from data under the property *not having to deal with people on the outside*. Dimensions to the property pertain to *not dealing with the public* or *only having a boss*. The notion of a 'closed attitude' is applied as

the data suggests customer focus relates only to phenomena associated with external people. In comparison to the 'open attitude', the 'closed attitude' theme is not as well supported in the data, represented in four of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'closed attitude' theme include:

Well I don't, I'm not that involved that much with the public // and not having to deal with the extra people on the outside // Because obviously the jobs where you're not in customer service, its a whole different environment // more working with yourself and your colleagues // I don't think that really applies with the area I'm working in // so that for me, I mean in my section we don't deal with external clients very much at all, mainly on the telephone.

The 'open attitude' theme is generated from data under the four properties *having a client/putting the customer first, knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are, viewing ourselves through the customers eyes/thinking what the customer wants as part of doing things, and considering the customer rather than the service/running the place according to who your customers are*. The notion of an 'open attitude' emerges from the data which suggests *customer awareness* requires Workers to both think about the things they do from the perspective of the customer, and to provide things customers need rather than simply do things. In other words, the data conveys a sense of doing the right things rather than simply doing things right.

Overall the 'open attitude' theme is well supported, represented across all data sets. Individually, the properties vary in representation and support. For example, *knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are* and *considering the customer rather than the service/running the place according to who your customers are*, are both well supported properties, represented across all data sets, while *viewing ourselves through the customers eyes/thinking what the customer wants as part of doing things* is the least supported property, represented across three of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'open attitude' theme include,

- for the *having a client/putting the customer first* property:

And we have to always make sure that they [customers] are a top priority // because they [customers] are the focus of our job really // I mean, you put the customer first // because basically we're for the public // and you see the public, they come first // and that the customer has to always have priority in our job // It's really just all about the

customers // that our work is focused on our customer // I see customer focus as being, being there for the customer // and we have a very strong sense of our customers.

- for the *knowledge of who the customers are and what their needs are* property:

In this organisation, it means understanding who our customers are // But just knowing your target market // and who are core customers // Well for me customer focus means having a client that you can identify with // Well its part of it isn't it, it is all about knowing who your customer is // what they're trying to achieve, what the customer wants // Just knowing what the customer requires // I think I would want to know what would the customer expect from the Ministry // and I guess having the knowledge of what they want // As I said its about understanding the needs of the clients // For me its knowing what teachers require from the museum // what do they [customers] need and what information they want to be fed.

- for the *viewing ourselves through the customers eyes/thinking what the customer wants as part of doing things* property:

And looking at the services we offer from their point of view, not from our point of view // And its - just as a tourist, I think its important for people dealing with tourists to be tourists // Customer focus would mean to me to perceive the ministry through the customers eyes // Are the facilities and services that are provided by the Ministry meeting the person's needs i.e. the suburbia needs, all of those sorts of things // as well as trying to do what you think they want.

- for the *considering the customer rather than the service/running the place according to who your customers are* property:

So we produce things in terms of goods and services and they're actually directed at somebody or something // and they [customers] determine our future, not the process // It means considering the customer rather than the product // because we don't do anything without considering what our clients, what our customers want // if your focusing on the customer, you're not just sort of saying what the Government is telling you what they want // now how do we make that experience here more meaningful // are and giving them what they want basically // if we cant' fit in with their plans, working plans around so that we can fit in, you know that sort of thing // and also taking into account the various physical disabilities that people may have // I believe its a process of identifying customers' needs // And therefore we need to look at what they [customers] want // Customer focus is that the ministry has got to be able to get out there and to talk to, to find out what the consumers want // Well so thinking well who are we running this place for, what are we here for, what's it all about // and know that whatever your doing its going to be of use to them.

The 'open attitude' theme also includes responses conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Responses are categorised as positive evaluations as they demonstrate Workers as practicing *customer awareness*. Responses are categorised as negative evaluations as they demonstrate Workers as not practicing *customer awareness*. Demonstration of Workers not practicing *customer awareness* includes responses suggesting Workers as not being interested in the customer focus strategy,

or instances where *considering what the customer wants* is perceived to be taken too far.

One illustrative thought unit of an explicit positive evaluation of the 'open attitude' theme is:

But we are doing more.

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'open attitude' theme across the five properties include:

In most cases I know what they want // I know I haven't been following what's been going on, what the goals are, what they want // The worst aspect is going over entirely to the customer, in my mind // Because we have become virtually a slave to I suppose the popular medium.

- *Commitment to change* sub category

Commitment to change, as a sub category, contains four properties, with varying dimensions. The sub category pertains to a *commitment* to both *changing* and *improving*, existing servicing delivery practices. Related to the *commitment to change* sub category is the notion of *mindsets/attitudes*. *Mindsets/attitudes* emerges as a separate sub category - see below. *Commitment to change* is linked to **attitudes towards customers** in that *changes* and *improvement on* existing servicing delivery practices are related to *mindsets/attitudes*. *Mindsets/attitudes* in context of a *commitment to change*, pertains to *adjusting to the customer way of thinking*. *Commitment to change*, along with *mindsets/attitudes*, are both well represented across all data sets.

Underpinning the four properties are a diverse range of dimensions. These dimensions pertain to actions which are a *change* or *improve upon*, existing service delivery practices.

The notion of a *commitment to change* is overtly illustrated in the property *greater commitment to the customer*. Overall, this property is not well supported, represented in only two of the six categories. It is important to the extent that *commitment to change* implies a relationship with *attitudes*.

Illustrative thought units for the *greater commitment to the customer* property include:

Probably in commitment // A commitment to always keeping the visitors needs paramount in the planning // Me personally it means a greater to commitment to the customers that the Ministry deals with.

Always looking to improve things/get the best results with all aspects is the most robust of the four properties. The property is moderately supported, represented across all data sets. Dimensions of the property are various and pertain to concepts ranging from *identifying where we failed, looking at how we are not doing the job properly, targeting resources to problem areas* and *trying to achieve new goals*. In other words, a *commitment to change and improve upon*, existing service delivery practices.

Illustrative thought units for the *always looking to improve things get the best results with all aspects* property include:

And they are always looking at ways to improve // I think when you look at the bad parts you always look at how you can improve // You've got to try to get your best results with all aspects // So how we improve things // and always looking for improvement // Well, if we feel something didn't quite, wasn't quite handled as well as it could have been handled, what are the procedures to make sure that its handled better in the future // it's like looking at a postmortem of an aircraft accident, you know how did this happen, how can we improve to prevent that accident from happening again, so it's the same sort of process // there is always improvements that you can make // and they [customers] can go around and enlighten themselves from what they are actually doing // figure out what, why people come here, what do they want // and I can then get involved specifically in time management around my clients // and ultimately I think the organisation has to give the front line to the people.

Adjusting to customers ways of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer is the next most supported property of the *commitment to change* sub category, represented across five of the six data sets. Dimensions of the property link the notion of *commitment to change* with *mindsets/ attitudes*. In other words, *commitment to change* implies a *realignment of people thoughts* in terms of *honing in on what the customer needs* and *adapting practices to suit the customer*.

Illustrative thought units for the *adjusting to customers ways of thinking/realigning our thoughts to the customer* property include:

So you have got to take into consideration their end points of view from the public perception you know // and aligning them more to the actual customer // realigning peoples thoughts // concentrating more on the actual customer's needs // And the work involved in realigning your thoughts and moving away from a structure, moving away

from preordained things I can follow // It means that every aspect of what your doing within that organisation is ultimately geared to the benefit or your client // And that is honing in on specifically what internal customers needs, you know the upper staff and external customers, being the public and their needs from the Gallery // and trying to adapt our practices to suit, you know // to change what they [customers] are not happy about to make them more happy // and rearranging our thoughts and activities towards delivering those goods // and we are learning how to work as a team, how to service each other // Well I guess its limited to perhaps now we're sort of focusing, well trying to focus on our, who our core customers.

Changing our focus is the least supported property for the *commitment to change* sub category, represented in only one data set. The property is grouped under the *commitment to change* sub category as the responses suggest *a change in focus* as one important factor associated with *changing* and *improving*, existing servicing delivery practices.

Illustrative thought units for the *changing our focus* property include:

We now have got to sort of change our focus, just change or modify to the Local Government // but really should we be focusing our time or putting our time into the volunteers and work with them rather than onto Local Government and say hey, its your responsibility for volunteers, not ours.

- *Involvement* sub category

Involvement, as a sub category, is minimally supported, represented across five of the six data sets. Although termed a sub category, *involvement* represents a theme in its own right. Four properties emerged for the sub category. Properties of the sub category all pertain to *consultation* and *customer involvement*. The four properties are distinguished from one another on the basis of their dimensions.

The properties *coming from the customers/involvement with the community/leaning towards what the customer wants* and *we depend on our customers* suggest *consultation* and *communication* as important elements pertaining to **attitudes towards customers**. The properties convey *involvement* with customers in a positive sense. This emerges as particularly important in the *we depend on our customers* property where the dimension *volunteers* conveys a strong positive evaluation.

Illustrative thought units for *involvement* in the positive sense include;

- for the *coming from the customers/involvement with the community/leaning towards what the customer wants* property:

Where they [customers] tell you what they're aiming for and stuff like that // So you need to keep, there needs to be, always, this two way communication // communication and feedback // you know involvement with the community // Its got to come from the customers themselves // I guess from the client side they've got to be able to communicate to you exactly what they want // Telling us what they [customers] really want // They have to define what they want // to actually to filter out what they're trying to get out of you // and trying to work out what they want and if we can do it // because those clients will then, they will have input into what the service they require as well // If you don't know what they want in the first place then you can not give them the service they will want // if there are more people saying you should have a certain thing, you are going to lean towards that // the public are starting to tell us more of what they want to see.

- for the *we depend on our customers* property:

We really depend on // Because without our volunteers, we can't protect this State or the community at large anyway // But of course in our organisation here, our volunteers are a huge force of customers for us // But everything they do for us, etc., we're at least a paid force to provide them // and I have got a lot of admiration for that // and I think that's the best side of it, is that its voluntary.

The other two properties, *we are not finding out what the customer wants/customers should be happy to see what he sees* and *tokenistic things/customer focus groups are a waste of time things* suggest *consultation* and *communication* with customers in a negative sense. The *we are not finding out what the customer wants/customers should be happy to see what he sees* property stands in contrast to the *coming from the customers/involvement with the community/leaning towards what the customer wants* property as responses suggest there is not enough *consultation* or *communication* occurring with customers. The *tokenistic things/customer focus groups are a waste of time things* property stands in contrast to the *coming from the customers/involvement with the community/leaning towards what the customer wants* property as responses suggest current *consultation* and *communication* with customers is of little value.

Illustrative thought units for *involvement* in the negative sense include:

But you don't go into the extreme of having anything with them to find out what they want, what they need // There really needs to - have a customer focus group when I first started, but that fell through // In my position is that the customers should come in and be happy to see what he sees // The customer focus groups that we had here was a bit of a waste of time for example // It was just a tokenistic thing // Well nothing came out of it, it was just a talk fest // Doing things because Government tells us that we should be doing it that way // I mean we did that because Government said that we needed to have that group // Oh no, it has been decided that it is probably no longer

worth continuing with it [customer focus groups] // But the members of the community, I don't know why they were involved.

Involvement in the positive sense is more strongly represented than it is in the negative sense.

- *Mindsets/attitudes* sub category

The *mindsets/attitudes* sub category is comprised of two properties, labeled as *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* and *bureaucratic/public service mentality*. Both properties contain varying dimensions of *mindsets/attitudes*. The two properties are distinguished from one another on the basis that the dimensions pertain to either positive or negative evaluations of *mindsets/attitudes*. The *attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* is associated with positive evaluations while the *bureaucratic/public service mentality* is associated with negative evaluations.

Illustrative thought units of *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* property include:

And we believe in what we do // I believe in the personal approach // and I believe that's the correct approach // and whether that involves going to see the customer or the customer comes down to see you // and I have always supported the principles and concepts of customer focus // It is an attitudinal thing // you can't have customer focus without putting a bit extra into it // attitudes towards our customers // I mean I find personally that you want to help // and wanting to help and provide the correct advice // Treating people who come into this organisation with respect and not fobbing them off // What the public think, they are right // we work for the government and they [public] are paying for our wages // and you have got to want the people of the State to come and look at these things // You are only working in here, the Park doesn't owe you anything // because you've got to think about car parking // you've got to think about toilets facilities // you've got to think about the customer I guess.

Although *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* property is associated with positive evaluations, emerging from the data are responses which convey explicit negative evaluations. Explicit negative evaluations for *the attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* property include:

People automatically assume, like the think shoppers are always automatically correct // and that's not quite the way it is.

The *bureaucratic/public service mentality* is associated with dimensions of *ignoring customers, not being interested in what customers want and not returning phone calls*. In other words, elements of the *bureaucratic/public service mentality* include negative attributions towards customers.

Illustrative thought units of the *bureaucratic/public service mentality* property include:

The old adage used to be 'you're paid to work not to think' // and saying "well the book says we can't do that, so we won't". and "that's not my job" or "I'm just new here and I can't really do that job" // where we perhaps had a public service mentality and it was just a case of "hey that's the answer like it or lump it, see you later" // I know quite often people wouldn't be interested in saying, "listen let me take your name and telephone number, I don't quite have that information at hand or whatever but I will find it out and I'll get back to you" // Their, I guess, should be a lot more involved in the bureaucratic side of things // and then nothing seems to happen - well just from my point of view // because of the bureaucracy // previously it might have been a case of lets try and end this call here // that's it, that's as much as I can give you and if you want some more you might have to try such and such // you get tied up in all the processes // I think some areas get tied up in what they are doing // Certain areas feel that they don't really have to provide a service to anyone else // Well certain departments feel that other departments are there to service their needs but they are not necessarily there to service the other departments' needs // that they get some people who seem to be able to, who try harder but are not necessarily able to achieve anything // and talking to some of them [Top Management Teams], some are of them are aware of the problem but as its not their particular job to do it // Not returning phone calls // or it being acknowledged a week later or a few days later // Ignoring them [customers] // You know not being interested and making it difficult for them [customers] // I've just had an experience ringing up a Department and there's this obviously very uninterested person on the other end who is really just going through the motions // or don't feel like talking or they don't know the answer to the question.

Overall, the sub category is moderately supported, represented across five of the six data sets.

General comment on attitudes towards customers category

Customer focus emerges as pertaining to two types of *mindsets/attitudes*, labeled *attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* and *bureaucratic/public service mentality*. The *attitudinal thing/believing in what you do* is associated with positive evaluations while the *bureaucratic/public service mentality* is associated with negative evaluations. The positive and negative evaluations of *mindsets/attitudes* emerge as related to *customer awareness* in terms of 'closed' and 'open' attitudes. A 'positive' *mindset/attitude* is associated with an 'open attitude' of *customer awareness*. *Commitment to change* emerges as a sub category which is also related to *mindsets/attitudes*. Emerging to a lesser extent is the notion of *involvement* which, as indicated by the data, is also an element associated with **attitudes towards customers**.

Category 3 - Customer understanding of ourselves as providers

Customer understanding of ourselves as providers as a category is comprised of three sub categories. Each sub categories is defined by a number of properties. Table 7.3 details the sub categories and properties for the **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

TABLE 7.3: Summary of Findings for the Customer Understanding of Ourselves as Providers Category

Sub category	Property
Customer awareness	Customers aware of what we do/customers understanding exactly the services we provide
	Management view my job as unimportant/its a job a trained monkey could do
	Customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them
	Customers come to see what they in their own mind want to see/customers always sort of want to get their own
	Customers not interested in what we do/customers want to do their own thing
Involvement	Informing customers of what we do/enlightening customers to what we are about
	Gaining customer confidence that your doing things right
	Getting across to the customer what we do/pushing customers along the direction we want to go
Communication and relationships	Customers getting upset/customers holding things against you
	We do have a good relationship with our customers at our level
	Poor communication between us and the customer
	The word of mouth/word on the street

Overall, the category is moderately supported across the data. Of the three sub categories, *customer awareness* is the most supported, represented across all data sets. *Involvement* is the next most supported sub category, also represented across all data sets. *Communication and relationships* is the least supported sub category, represented across one of the six data sets.

- *Customer awareness* sub category

Customer awareness, as in the *customer awareness/commitment* sub category under category 2 **attitudes towards customers**, pertains to responses concerning attitudes, knowledge and understanding. It differs from the *customer awareness/commitment* sub category under category 2 in that the responses pertain to customer attitudes, knowledge and understanding. In other words, *customer awareness* as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to respondent perceptions of customer (as opposed to self) attitudes, knowledge and understanding.

Five properties for the *customer awareness* sub category emerge. The first property, *customers aware of what we do/customers understanding exactly the services we provide* is comprised of dimensions grounding the notion of *customer awareness* as a factor influencing customer focus. Response convey customers in a positive sense. Illustrative thought units for the *customers aware of what we do/customers understanding exactly the services we provide* property include:

I would say that 95 percent of our clients are well aware of what we do down there and what we perform and what's available // I guess it relates to, firstly your client has got understand exactly the services you provide // and they understand the service that we offer // that they're [customers] expecting from us // we see it as something that the people of Perth are not willing to see change too much.

The remaining four properties of the *customer awareness* sub category are labeled *management view my job as unimportant/its a job a trained monkey could do*, *customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them*, *customers come to see what they in their own mind want to see/customers always sort of want to get their own* and *customers not interested in what we do/customers want to do their own thing*. The four properties are also concerned with respondent perceptions of customer attitudes, knowledge and understanding. However, for these properties, Worker responses convey a sense of customers as *not interested in* or are *off the mark* with what they actually do provide. In other words, the four properties are related in the sense that a negative perception of customers emerges. This includes responses indicating that *customers come to see what they want to see*, *customers asking you to do things they could do themselves*, and *customers always sort of want to get their own*. Of the four, the *customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them* property is the most supported, represented across four of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units of negative perceptions of customers in terms of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** include,

- for the *management view my job as unimportant/its a job a trained monkey could do* property:

Because of the way they [TMT] view my job as unimportant // and a lot of people here have the view that the switchboard is totally unimportant // its a job anybody could do, you could train a chimp to do it // and they don't think it is important // other people think oh we are just the records down there, don't worry about it.

- for the *customers being off the mark with what we do not sure what we can do for them* property:

They [customers] just have a tunnel vision about what we are // but that once again it comes back to them [customers] having a misconception about what role we can play anyway // and they [customers] all have a different idea of what service or what role you have // And I think its that misconception that comes within it // well as far as business names is concerned - they [customers] do not understand our Acts, our practices or our procedures // or they [customers] can take a wrong perspective on what we can do and what our role is // So if they're [customers] off the mark there // Obviously some of them [requests] are totally ridiculous, that can't be done // and yet expecting immediate service on something // I mean they could be listening in front of me but they could be listening blindly // For example they [customers] have problems, they have some complaint about something which is not actually our fault // and they wouldn't listen because as far as they were concerned they were right // a customer always likes to think that he can get something for nothing // and that then gives the impression that your not sort of pulling your weight // they [customers] probably try to put the onus onto us to resolve their situation // Their not sure why we are here, OK // So they're not sure what we can do for them // and quite often they find out that there is not a lot we can do for them // They [customers] seem to look upon us as a quick fix solution for every thing // They think that we are here to solve all the problems for them // Your a government organisation, you should be able to fix it // I mean the first thing I was going to say is consumers believing that we're just here just for them // And very often to it is something that they can do themselves // you know work out a calculation that they could themselves if they really wanted to.

- for the *customers come to see what they in their own mind want to see:customers always sort of want to get their own* property:

So therefore we get problems with people coming to the museum expecting certain things // I mean there could be a big difference between what we're providing and what they're coming to see // This is what I mean. You can't always be - people want to be sort of - get their own // they don't like it because it doesn't suit their purposes // if they've got this preconceived idea of what you are going to be providing or whatever // something the public in their own minds like - they know what they like, they come to see what they like - then don't see what they like // So they skirt everything else which is in the building, so they are not really picking up what we are showing // they [customers] are guided by what they, in their own mind, want to see // They [customers] come in and they ask the questions and again they are guided by the attendant on the floor to look at something similar to what they expect to see.

- for the *customers not interested in what we do/customers want to do their own thing* property:

Exactly, their not interest in really // Its very difficult to actually get opinions from people I find in this park // to get people to actually express what they want // I find that they don't discuss their problems // and their ignoring these areas // it just gets put into the too hard basket or just left. put at the bottom of the pile.

Overall, the *customer awareness* sub category is well supported, represented across all data sets. In terms of themes, *customers awareness* in a 'negative' sense is substantially more represented than it is in a 'positive' sense.

- *Involvement* sub category

Involvement, as in the sub category of the same name under category 2 **attitudes towards customers**, pertains to responses concerning consultation and communication. It differs from the *involvement* sub category under category 2 in that the responses associate consultation and communication with customers as opposed to systems and methods of consultation and communication. In other words, *involvement* as a sub category of **customer understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to systems and methods of consultation and communication with customers.

The *involvement* sub category is comprised of four properties, labeled *informing customers of what we do/enlightening customers to what we are about*, *gaining customer confidence that your doing things right*, *getting across to the customer what we do/pushing customers along the direction we want to go*, and *customers getting upset/customers holding things against you*.

The first three properties refer to different elements of *involvement*. In other words, the properties convey different ways of how involvement with customers is achieved. For example, *involvement* is expressed in certain contexts in terms of *informing* and *enlightening customers*. In other contexts, *involvement* is expressed in terms of *getting across* and *pushing customers along*. In other contexts, a sense of *involvement* is gained in terms of *gaining customer confidence*.

The meaning of involvement across the different contexts emerges as pertaining to different themes. These themes give a sense of *involvement* from either a 'self' or 'others' interests. *Involvement* in the sense of *informing* and *enlightening customers*,

and *gaining customer confidence* is grouped under the 'others interests' theme. Responses are said to convey a sense of 'others interests' as *involvement* is from a frame of reference primarily concerned with customer interests. *Involvement* in the sense of *getting across* and *pushing customers along* is grouped under the 'self interests' theme. Responses are said to convey a sense of 'self interests' as *involvement* is from a frame of reference primarily concerned with organisational interests.

The fourth property, *customers getting upset/customers holding things against you*, is related to *involvement* in the sense of 'self interest'. It is said be related to *involvement* in terms of 'self interests' to the extent that *customers getting upset/customers holding things against you* is a consequence of not providing what the customer requires. This property is weakly supported, represented across only two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for *involvement* in the sense of the 'others interests' theme include,

- for the *informing customers of what we do/enlightening customers to what we are about* property:

Making sure that the customer is able to pick up what is the information that is here // letting the public know what's happening // But other times you do need to help them along // looking at ways of getting ideas from the public // to discuss on-goings in the park // I see it as being promotion // So I see it as being an awareness thing and promotion // And that's how I see it. Your able to promote yourself // its about really getting across to the public that we're here for you and this is what we do // make them realise that what we were doing yesterday is now old fashioned // Customer focus in its extreme is a macro issue looking at more things that we should be getting out. right out into market place // Getting information out, most definitely is // Customer Focus I image would mean enlightening the customer to what we actually do and what we are about I imagine // Well we have got to get across to the customer that we display art // And also, well you have got to keep your customers informed with what's going on in the sense of things change // so that we can educate not only consumers but also retailers as to what fair trading issues are all about // I mean the mailing that they have to customers which explains what happens, how they process it // I mean we can write little documents.

- for the *gaining customer confidence that your doing things right* property:

Hopefully we gain their confidence that your doing things right // and sort of gain their confidence // not making, you know errors // but if you can explain to them why it happened // then next time they come down their not generally as domineering.

The 'others interests' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Explicit negative evaluations convey a sense that the organisational systems and methods of consultation and communication with customers are the worst aspects to customer focus. Negative evaluations are weakly supported, represented in only two of the six data sets. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations for the *involvement* in the sense of the 'others interests' theme include:

The fact then that many of us feel that the Museum doesn't advertise enough, at all // Is dealing with people who - with customers - who haven't been informed by the organisation of what we've got // and not getting it because they haven't been told // they [customers] don't recognise you.

Illustrative thought units for *involvement* in the sense of the 'self interests' theme include,

- for the *getting across to the customer what we do* / *pushing customers along the direction we want to go* property:

And giving them what they want while you're also getting you message across // and to sell them the program // offering them the program // Showing them what they want and selling it // what we should be is educating the public along the path to where we want to go // Do we want to push them in a direction that we want them to go // We are pushing the customer in the direction we want to go // and that is what we should be getting across to the public // But that I am not disagreeing in what we are doing // say this is why this is good, this is why you should use it // And that's a package that we have developed down in records which we have sort to having, been using it for the last six or seven months // And the person on the other end of the query can get upset // and then hold that against you as well.

- for the *customers getting upset* / *customers holding things against you* property:

And the person on the other end of the query can get upset // and then hold that against you as well.

Overall, the *involvement* sub category is minimally supported, represented across all data sets. In terms of themes, *involvement* in a 'others interests' sense is substantially more represented than it is in a 'self interests' sense.

- *Communication and relationships* sub category

Communication and relationships, as a sub category, is comprised of three properties labeled, *we do have a good relationship with our customers at our level*, *poor communication between us and the customer* and *the word of mouth* / *word on the*

street. The sub category is minimally supported, represented across two of the six data sets.

The *we do have good relationships with our customers at our level* property suggests *relationships* as one element pertaining to **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. This property is not well supported, represented only once in one data set. However, it is important to the extent that it links the notion of *relationships* with **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**.

Illustrative thought units for the *we do have good relationships with our customers at our level* property include:

We have a reasonably good relationships with our customers. like at our level.

The *poor communication between us and the customer* property suggests current communication with customers as being below what Workers perceive it should be. Dimensions to this property are related to dimensions for the *customers being off the mark with what we do/not sure what we can do for them* property under the sub category *customer awareness*. They are said to be related in that meanings implied in the responses portray customers in a negative light in regard to their *understanding of ourselves as providers*.

Illustrative thought units for the *poor communication between us and the customer* property include:

Another thing is if they can not give us the information what they want us to give us // so we just rely on what they are giving us // But with some they don't complete the documentation // because we don't have the proper documentation // But if there is proper communication then that could be eliminated.

The remaining property, *the word of mouth/word on the street*, pertains to actions which enhance **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. This property implies *communication and relationships* as important elements for **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. A dimension to the property is the notion that *if your not meeting expectations, customers will portray you in a negative light*. The *word of mouth/word on the street* property is weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *word of mouth/word on the street* property include:

Because of the talk around // whatever industry their in or whatever, so the word does get // I mean the word of mouth is always // and I think the word in industry is that yeah // Word on the street // So you quite often hear or I heard you wouldn't be able to do this sort of thing anyway // Or if you're not meeting customer expectations, they will be negative towards you and portray you outside in a poor light // So if they're [customers] not going to portray you in a good light // if you're not meeting the expectations, you're not providing a service that they expect or you haven't made it clear what service you can provide, or you make it clear that you're providing a service that you can't, they're going to portray you poorly amongst other people and that's the bottom line.

General comment on customer understanding of ourselves as providers category

Emerging from the data is the picture of customer focus as pertaining to **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. **Customer understanding of ourselves as providers** emerges as pertaining to three key phenomena, labelled *customer awareness*, *involvement*, and *communication and relationships*. Of the three, *customer awareness* emerges as the most important, while *communication and relationships* the least important.

Category 4 - Our understanding of ourselves as providers

Our understanding of ourselves as providers as a category is comprised of three sub categories. Each sub category is strongly represented throughout all data sets. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 7.4 details the sub categories and properties for the **our understanding of ourselves as providers** category.

TABLE 7.4: Summary of Findings for the Our Understanding of Ourselves as Providers Category

Sub category	Property
Purpose and role	Knowing our purpose/the track we're taking Knowing the job/understanding what we do
	Not looking at the overall picture Customer focus is not something you think about everyday/its just your personal customer focus that you do Only knowing one side of it/don't know One of the best kept secrets/managers assume Workers and managers views on customer focus are align Everybody's doing their own thing/not all on the same wave length People tend to ignore customer focus/we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it off Providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right
	Trying to get the two things working together/being the meat in the sandwich/getting a compromise between the two Having to say 'no' sometimes/you can't please everybody
	Customer focus is talked about/customer focus has been put into writing
	Processes/systems/ methods
Not doing unnecessary things/not trundling along with the old systems What's talked about is what happens Got to present the right front/got to be customer orientated	
Restriction /getting caught up/there are constraints There are problem areas/ putting us in the bad spot	

TABLE 7.4 (Cont.): Summary of Findings for the Our Understanding of Ourselves as Providers Category

	Things that concern me greatly/things that this agency does not do
	Outsourcing/ customer will go elsewhere
	There isn't the two way communication between Workers and the managers/managers don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey
	Having a good relationship with the people you work with Supportive management
Change	Gearing towards customer focus/changing ways of doing things Changing our work practices to give management what they want
	Changing the attitude/getting away form the old style mentality of look there's the rules The cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second

- *Purpose and role* sub category

The *purpose and role* sub category is comprised of 12 properties. As a whole, the sub category is strongly supported and represented across all data sets. Individually, the properties are supported to varying degrees. The properties relate to four themes, termed 'general', 'not shared', 'balancing' and 'talked about'.

The 'general' theme is generated from data grouped under the properties *knowing our purpose/the track we're taking* and *knowing the job/understanding what we do*. The two properties are related in the sense that the various dimensions grouped under each property pertain to respondents perceptions of the organisations *purpose and role*. One dimension to *knowing our purpose/the track we're taking* relates to notion of planning in the sense of *the requirement of the strategic plan forces you to be customer focused*. The 'general' theme is strongly supported, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units of the 'general' theme include,

- for the *knowing our purpose/the track we're taking* property:

So its about being able to look at what is the objective of the agency and/or purpose // you know that not only are you complying with what the organisation requires you to

do // And ultimately achieving what the agency has set as its goals as far as strategic plans and things like that // So the track we're taking // Because people through the door is a measurement of ours // So therefore the focus must be on getting people in // it is also very much looking at getting numbers in // they need to justify what the institution is doing; the money that they are receiving and the funding and everything // by more or less operating under the customer focus guidelines // and from that top statement, that is what we are working to // its very directed to the people of Western Australia // it is very directed to the community // to bring to the attention of the people of Western Australia and anybody who happens to visit Western Australia, what we have got here // Well without customers we wouldn't be here for a start // Particularly Kings Park because we are a service - I mean we wouldn't have a job if we didn't have customers // That's what we're here, are all about // Because if we didn't have the public we wouldn't really be able to sort of continue with what we doing // Well without customers we wouldn't be here for a start // I mean without people coming through the doors we would be a very dead institution // that we need to be able to show that we are providing quality service // Our customer charter at the moment is to go and to reach community at community level // and in that way then we can make up, lets say a goal, what we can achieve // then we know what direction we should be heading in for improving the park // the requirement to provide that, that level of service or that focus with the strategic plan and all that sort of thing // you've got the requirement to be customer focus.

- for the *knowing the job/understanding what we do* property:

So how we go about running the park // I mean your job is to try and keep the best aspects of the park for our customers // Well I think a good part is first of all, knowing your position - what you're meant to do // and we need to achieve that role // Is knowing the job // We're not here just to sort of self generate work, we run an art gallery // then we know that, do we continue something, do we improve something, do we stop something // and we always have to keep our records up-to-date // we have to actually analyse their Leave Records, to amend calculation on our Annual Leave, Sick Leave and Long Service Leave and then get back to say this is what we've got, do you agree? // So you obviously got to prioritise // It means meeting the people, working with them and trying to please them when they make enquiries // if it is not inside my head, then able to know where I can get it from quickly // because we are mature enough to know the role and deadlines that we have got to basically come up with // I try to focus myself on the whole Park rather than just specific spots of the Park.

The 'general' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations for the 'general' theme include:

Then yes that's what it does, to a large extent // When it comes to getting sponsors for creating displays, we're creating good interpretations // Now that's an exciting future // I try to get a broad land view of everything // but I try to do it.

The 'not shared' theme is the most varied of the *purpose and role* sub category. Seven properties fall within this theme, namely *not looking at the overall picture*, *customer focus is not something you think about everyday its just your personal*

customer focus that you do, only knowing one side of it/don't know, one of the best kept secrets/managers assume Workers and managers views on customer focus are align, everybody's doing their own thing/not all on the same wave length, people tend to ignore customer focus/we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it off and providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right.

The data is grouped under the theme of 'not shared' in the sense that customer focus is perceived as something performed by individuals themselves rather than something performed by the organisation as a whole. In other words, dimensions to the properties grouped under the 'not shared' theme convey a sense of different levels of understanding concerning the organisations *purpose and role*. This sentiment comes through strongly in the property *providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right*. Respondents are saying they know how to provide good customer focus however in some instances they perceive this in an organisational context as not being what is required of them. For example, *dealing with complaints when they are out of your capacity to deal with them and servicing customers we shouldn't ahead of customers that we do have jurisdiction over*.

As a whole, the 'not shared' theme is well supported, represented across all data sets. Individually, properties grouped under this theme are supported to varying degrees. Of the seven properties grouped under the 'not shared' theme, *providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right* is the most robust, however is represented across only one of the six data sets. The least supported property is *people tend to ignore customer focus we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it off*, which is represented across three data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'not shared' theme include,

- for the *not looking at the overall picture* property:

But I think that some people are really focused on what they are doing // and that is their key focus // and this is my job to change the blinds // or this is my job to tell people not to go over that line and they are not supposed to go over that line so I am going to tell them to get back.

- for the *customer focus is not something you think about everyday/its just your personal customer focus that you do* property:

But its probably not a thing, to them or me personally, to think about every day, its just that you do it // everyone's going to have their own ideas // Its their dedication to Customer Focus. And it will happen whether or not the higher people actually ask

whether or not // Its just your personal customer focus that you do it // It is informally of course // Once again I have not seen anything in print coming from the Gallery // but you know its more or less expected of everyone, we know that.

- for the *only knowing one side of it/don't know* property:

Well I can only relate it to say my direct line manager // so what the real estate industry is doing or what the housing industry division, etc. and so on, I can't talk to you about because I don't know necessarily // Its difficult for me to be explicit because I only know one side of it // and I'm not totally convinced that I have that full picture // My interpretation of customer focus is probably different to other people // I don't know, it is hard.

- for the *one of the best kept secrets/managers assume Workers and managers views on customer focus are align* property:

And some of the ideas they come up with are not practical to be able to put out into the market place // everybody has a certain amount of fundamental thoughts and ways they (TMT) want to go.

- for the *everybody's doing their own thing/not all on the same wave length* property:

Not every body seems to be along the same lines here // And I think its hard when everybody is not doing the same thing // your not all on the same wave length // But it tends to be here, I think a lot of people just, people just go their own way // I think, do their own thing // because everyone so individual, so every section, they have got their own sort of ways of doing things.

- for the *people tend to ignore customer focus we have a charter but I couldn't sprout it of* property:

And most people have just forgotten about it // We have a Customer Focus charter, yes. I couldn't sprout it off // but I mean people tend to ignore it [customer focus] // In the initial it really doesn't mean much.

- for the *providing good customer focus but thinking that's not right* property:

And I don't necessarily think that's right if we truly are fair trading //Well I think sometimes just to get, I mean there are some complaints that come into the ministry that we shouldn't be dealing with // some officers may of made a mistake and accepted the complaint // and we realise we really don't have jurisdiction // but we try and resolve it anyway because it is in our hands // but they are not really one of our customers because its a business // they've bought a computer to do with a business, we don't have jurisdiction // Whereas management would really expect us to still make an approach // Well we would see the complaint, the complaint is not justified, its to do with a business, the computers to do with a business // whereas if we cut them off at the initial stage it would never have got to a complaint stage // So on a phone thing, lets see I would have refused ten people a complaint, to lodge a complaint with us //

because your only focusing on that one individual when other people have got equal complaints and they are due equal service // And also the person that we don't even have jurisdiction for, they also are getting in front of someone that we do have jurisdiction.

The 'balancing' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions suggesting two types of *purpose and role*. Two properties are grouped under the 'balancing' theme, namely *trying to get the two things working together/being the meat in the sandwich/getting a compromise between the two* and *having to say 'no' sometimes/you can't please everybody*. The 'balancing' aspect pertains to what the public expects of service providers with what service providers actually offer to the public. In this context, 'balancing' emerges as pertaining to servicing in the sense of 'others interests' (what the public expects of service providers) with servicing in the sense of 'self interests' (what the service providers actually offer to the public). This is evident across the dimensions for the properties which are illustrated by the following responses.

I won't compromise my relationship with traders.
We can't give them something, I can't give them something that I don't believe their entitled to.

In the first response, respondents are saying that they will not compromise their relationships with their customers. In other words, the response conveys a strong sense of *purpose and role* as servicing in terms of 'others interests'. In the second response, respondents are saying that they will not provide a service that they perceive the customer is not entitled to, even though they are capable of providing the service. In other words, the response conveys a strong sense of *purpose and role* as servicing in terms of 'self interests'.

Of the two properties, *trying to get the two things working together/being the meat in the sandwich/getting a compromise between the two* is the most robust, represented across all six data sets. The *having to say 'no' sometimes/you can't please everybody* property is weakly supported, represented across four data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'balancing' theme include,

- for the *trying to get the two things working together/being the meat in the sandwich/getting a compromise between the two* property:

See it is difficult in the Gallery because you have got two things // So the two things working, trying to work together // Quite often you then become the meat in the sandwich I suppose // The meat in the sandwich // and so you get caught between the two // and its kind of trying to make the two gel // They [customers] have certain perceptions up and we have certain perceptions up // Well is what we perceive the

public expects of us and what we actually offer to the public // which is providing a service within the parameters set down by the law that you have to administer // We can't give them something, I can't give them something that I don't believe their entitled to // I won't compromise my relationship with traders // pushing them to give things that I don't believe that their, not obliged to give // So its a matter of, in line with what the Ministry can deal with and what their role is // Oh Gosh. Getting some sort of compromise between the two // basically that's the thing that I get the impressions sometimes that clients, you want to provide a better service for them and your doing your best but they [customers] get interpreted by others [managers] as Oh hang on your not giving them the service that they require // And some of them think 'well this is what people should learn and this is what people should know, and it may not be enjoyable but they should, and therefore it is a self-centered, a kind egocentric thing // Because I feel that this is what should happen with the collection and others in top management really want to get it out there and want people to be able enjoy it and appreciate it. And others want to really kind of, you know, it's that 'bums on seats' thing, numbers through the door // let's promote this exhibition in this particular way and then there are other people who think well that's denigrating the work // So while you are pushing it to get lots of people to come, well there also maybe a sense that, well it's not respectful or it's you know, it's something. So that is a problem as well. Difficult // Customer Focus is the service that the customers requires and the services we're actually giving. Instead of saying yes we want this and we're saying yes we can provide it, but it is a compromise between what they want and how we can provide it.

- for the *having to say 'no' sometimes/you can't please everybody* property:

We can't offer across the board something for everyone all the time // it [customer focus] does tie you down to what you're supposed to do // that you are tied down and sometimes, I find it hard to say no sometimes // you can't please everyone // but what we're doing, you'll always get a few that will say, 'no we don't like that'.

The 'talked about' theme contains data pertaining to perceptions suggesting customer focus is something that is talked about across the participating agencies. One property is grouped under the 'talked about' theme, namely *customer focus is talked about/customer focus has been put into writing*. The theme of 'talked about' is generated from the dimensions of the property which include notions of plenty of meetings going on, quite a lot of talk about it, putting out reams and reams of paper and nice charters. Overall, there is a strong perception that customer focus is *very much around the place*.

The 'talked about' theme is moderately supported, represented across five of the six data sets. Illustrative thought units for the 'talked about' theme include:

There seems to be an awful lot of meetings going on // there seems to be quite a lot of talk about it [customer focus] // and you know management at the top can come out with all these things and say, "OK we'll implement this and we'll implement that" // But its the sort of thing that we would talk about it most when we have an annual staff conference // Its something that we talked about either directly or indirectly // The management to me seems to, they have meetings and meetings and meeting to talk about all these things // They [Top Management Teams] put out reams and reams of paper and nice charters and all nice things // So it's very much around the place // I

think that's very relevant, its something which you hear on a daily basis, in every event // I would say that that's their [Top Management Team] articulated intention so its a very strong - I mean team meetings you have in regards to better ways of dealing with people // but just briefly from what I have read // I've seen it written down on pieces of paper // I mean our circulars, from computer tech ran something on customer focus.

The 'talked about' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. The data suggests from the Worker point of view that merely talking about customer focus can be a negative thing, *a bit cliché*. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'talked about' theme include:

But although I often hear the boss and other senior people - they sometimes they say things like "Well we've got to support our customers" // but it may only be just a matter of talking // They [management] may be saying something - "The customers won't like that, and I think the idea is that we should ask the customer // if we want them [customers] to do something, perhaps we should ask them what they think // But the point is, its all very well saying these things // they can sound like clichés.

- *Processes/systems/methods* sub category

Processes/systems/methods, as in the sub category of the same name in the **structure of customer focus** category, pertains to responses associated with performing customer focus. It differs from the *processes/systems/methods* sub category in the **structure of customer focus** category in that the responses pertain to performing customer focus from a self perspective. In other words, *processes/systems/methods* as a sub category of **our understanding of ourselves as providers** pertains to respondent perceptions of how customer focused is being achieved.

Process/systems/methods relates to *purpose and role* sub category in that a number of the former sub category's properties appear to pertain to the 'talked about' and 'not shared' themes of the latter sub category. Although related, the two are kept separate in that properties of the *purpose and role* sub category pertain to responses of what it means for organisations to be customer focused, as opposed to perceptions of how customer focused is being achieved.

Fifteen properties for the *processes/systems/methods* sub category emerged. As a whole, the sub category is strongly supported and represented across all data sets. Individually, the properties are supported to varying degrees. The properties relate to six themes in performing customer focus, termed 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'barriers/problems', 'threats', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships'. The themes of 'non commitment', 'commitment', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships' emerge as pertaining to the more social aspects of organisational functioning, while the themes

of 'barriers/problems' and 'threats' convey the notion of *processes/systems/methods* in a technical sense.

The 'non commitment' theme is generated from data grouped under the five properties, *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what is put into practice, its pretty impossible to actually take up with what we've said we're going to do/we're suppose to know everything but we don't, the fit between what we do and what customers expect is so wide it just falls through/we are not supplying what we should, problems the TMT have not addressed/we could be world renown if management wanted to and not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus*. The theme of 'non commitment' is generated from the properties and dimensions which suggest *processes/systems/methods* as not being aligned with the perceived *purpose and role*. This is strongly illustrated in the property, *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what is put into practice*.

Overall, properties grouped under the theme of 'non commitment' are well supported, represented across all data set. Individually, the properties are supported to varying degrees. *Not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus* is the most robust of the five properties, represented across five of the six data sets. Dimensions grouped under this property are various and wide ranging. Differences amongst the dimensions reflects the diversity in which 'non commitment' to *processes/systems/methods* is perceived. Dimensions vary from *things your know yourself are wrong which customers pick up on* and *things which should have been fixed months ago to not training people properly* and *there are things we're not made aware of*. The least supported property is *problems the TMT have not addressed/we could be world renown if management wanted to*, which is represented across only one data set.

Illustrative thought units for the 'non commitment' theme include:

- for the *what's talked about is not what happens/there is a difference between the plan and what is put into practice* property:

Big on rhetoric but very poor on actual performance // Well, everyone knows we have a customer focus service charter implemented but it's not utilised as far as I'm concerned // but its not an every day thing // I mean what the customer's needs are and what is actually going to be given at the end of the day is sometimes in conflict // Well we claim to be, whether they are or not though // because what they are saying is one thing // your not achieving any goals of what you originally set out to do // Maybe there is a sort of difference of - what they plan and what is actually put into place // and you'd

love to see these things happen just like that but they don't // But meeting our rhetoric hasn't necessarily occurred I don't think // No other deliberate action to align our thoughts to the customers has occurred apart from things that might spin off the strategic plan in better allocation of resources // I guess the only one I could say further to that is it gets back to the talk and whether that's exactly what's happened because quite often that's not the case // You can have all the customer service charters and things like that in place but that doesn't necessarily mean that's what happening // I think there is a gap between the way we work and the way we are perceived // That is not happening in the big picture // And when someone up the top gets it they come down heavy.

- for the *its pretty impossible to actually take up with what we've said we're going to do/we're suppose to know everything but we don't* property:

Sometimes it pretty impossible to actually to actually take up with what we've said we're going to do // We're suppose to know everything but we don't know everything // What we're doing now is we're possibly going out but we don't have the resources to do them properly // we tell them that we're going to do this and we're going to do that, and when it comes to actually putting it on the ground, we can't do it because we don't have the people // So I mean it may not always work // We have an Information Centre out there that doesn't give any information about the Park // you know people giving commitments that the agency can't perform to // and then creating expectations that you can't fill // So with information like that, it can take quite a while to actually get this information together // but they had built into their agreement that employees should answer the phone before 5 rings all and all this types of stuff // So that was something that stuck to my mind and I thought was bloody ridiculous.

- for the *fit between what we do and what customers expect is so wide it just falls through/we are not supplying what we should* property:

The sort of the fit between what is that we do and what it is, is what it is expected is so wide that it just falls through // or that its different from what they were thinking // You know, kind of, I guess an inward looking thing // The reality not being what they expect // it is not what they expect // That we are just not supplying what we should // And so as a consequence of that, people don't get their queries answered to // but the little people enquiries don't get answered to.

- for the *problems the TMT have not addressed/we could be world renown if management wanted to* property:

Its sometimes that they [TMT] don't take any notice but I think that they // and these are problems that as I have said before, that haven't been addressed // it would work very well, with what is happening but its not addressed // that its within this organisation that those issues were addressed everything else would fall into place // That was one thing that was actually going to be addressed // it was suppose to be addressed // It could be much better // it could be like a world renowned museum if they really wanted it to be // Yes, its relies far too much of economic rationalism and not enough on actual Customer Focus // the lack of support been given by certain members to the group.

- for the *not backing it up/no encouragement to provide customer focus* property:

How can I say this, the people want high customer focus but I don't think that they're willing to put in the actual money that // There is absolutely no way that we can actually do these things now // We keep asking, we keep saying what the public are wanting, what the people want but Management work on things that they wish to give the public // and we'll get directional memos but its all sort of black and white on paper rather than the face to face contact // but it is not filtering down to any great depth or degree to the actual nuts and bolts, the staff themselves that actually have to put this into practice // If you try and put the things into, you know implement all the things we are trained to do, and if you try and do it on your own nobody seems to be there to help you or support you or say yes, that's a good job // And a lot of these, and I blame management partially for that because I don't think they follow things up // And the other side of it from their point of view as far as I'm concerned is, nobody seems to feel, to think any better of you, if you try and do it yourself // but not backed up // because they're not given some sort of encouragement to actually provide a good customer focus to the customers // and there is nothing I suppose encouraging the Workers to actually provide a good service to the customers // you are just there to do the job // We need to make a lot more informative brochures to help the customers // they could have the monetary resources to do that if they really wanted to // My personal experience of this is that quite recently we've been given a whole lot of training for Customer Focus with guides and tour and things like that and they've just dropped our hours // But you still hear a lot of other Workers saying 'we keep asking for training and we're not getting it' // And also there I don't think they train people properly // From our point of view, from my personal point of view, being a switch board operator, I can't get to go to all the training anyway // and I think that if you have to fight to get onto training programs to treat the customers better, I find that very poor, very poor // We don't know what exactly what's happening // we know things are happening but we don't know how its happening // You know, like the "bar talk", stuff like that with people you know // Well this is the way I feel, if they gave us some sort of encouragement to treat our customers equally or better, then we would do it // I can not work as I want to work // because there isn't a lot of information that I have actually seen going around as to what my responsibilities are towards my customer // but there's no set procedures been put down or no training or anything like that to sort of back it up // but no one has actually sat down with us and said OK this is what it says and this is what we expect of you and this is how we want you to go about it // Now there are a number of things you could do in the place to make it world class // so they [customers] go away disappointed.

The 'non commitment' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'non commitment' theme across the five properties include:

Probably that it doesn't get done // Management doesn't keep their promises that they are trying to say to the people // To me, they keep promising, promising // The worst thing is that // And now with this new Management they've told us that they are going to do a new reclassification and they still doesn't do it // They promised us more training which was a bone of contention // because for years and years they were promising, nothing was happening // there's nothing // I think failing to do that, failing to perform properly, failing // Not providing that service // That its not there // Yes it goes on heaps // The public aren't getting what they want // but then they allow answering machines left, right and centre which is just crazy, I mean to me that isn't customer focused // Management have allowed answering machines in, people just

can't get through to officers sometimes because of these answering machines // And we are saying in fact that it seems that it has actually got worse // That's how its generally been. You follow what I'm saying there? Yeah.

The 'commitment' theme is generated from data grouped under three properties, namely *not doing unnecessary things/not trundling along with the old systems, what's talked about is what happens* and *got to present the right front/got to be customer orientated*. The 'commitment' theme is weakly supported, represented across five of the six data sets. The notion of 'commitment' comes from the data which relates *processes/systems/methods* to doing things that are talked about as being required in being customer focused. *Processes/systems/methods* in this sense takes on meaning of 'commitment'. This stands in contrast to the Top Management Team data where *processes/systems/methods* were construed in the more technical aspects of organisational functioning.

Illustrative thought units for the 'commitment' theme include,

- for the *not doing unnecessary things/not trundling along with the old systems* property:

So lets not waste our time on side issues // There's not point doing more that is necessary or rather not necessary // And its very easy to get side-tracked from our defined core business and what our job really is what our focus really should be // because that's waste of time and effort // So instead of trundling along in the old systems, whatever the systems may have been.

- for the *what's talked about is what happens* property:

So a lot of the things they're promising are happening // So it is happening, its been done // They've talked about a centennial enhancement plan and all this sort of thing, they've talked about a Hale recreational area improvement and all these things have happened // They've told us that they were going to get consultants into the Park to look at ways of improving it and they've done that // From my own point of view, I have received training.

- for the *got to present the right front/got to be customer orientated* property:

And from that then applying Gallery strategies to service the customer needs // but as public servants we've got to present the right front to our customers and public // I think in this day and age you really got to be customer oriented // and also when we have trainees, I emphasize that with trainees as well, not only to giving customer focus service but for their own use every day when they work as part of the team // And most people have got a customer charter // and its just something you have to do I think // From there I guess having the training and by resources I mean staff all trained // and trying to get - having the information available to you so you can do it quickly.

In comparison, the 'non commitment' theme emerges stronger than the 'commitment' theme. In other words, in terms of *processes/systems/methods*, Workers are saying that there is 'non commitment' to customer focus by the organisations.

The 'barriers/problems' theme is generated from data grouped under three properties, namely *restriction /getting caught up/there are constraints, there are problem areas/ putting us in the bad spot* and *things that concern me greatly/things that this agency does not do*. The theme is well represented across five of the six data sets.

The notion of 'barriers/problems' comes from the data which suggests **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is related to *processes/systems/methods* which are recognised as inhibiting customer focus efforts. Dimensions to the properties are numerous which reflect the wide range of 'barriers/problems' encountered across the participating agencies. Individually, the three properties are represented to the same extent. In terms of support, *restriction /getting caught up/there are constraints* and *there are problem areas/ putting us in the bad spot* emerge across four data sets, while *things that concern me greatly/things that this agency does not do* emerges across two.

Many of the responses grouped under the 'barriers/problems' theme are also grouped under dimensions and properties previously described. The grouping of previously described dimensions under the 'barriers/problems' theme places the meaning of the response in context. For example, the response *not putting it across in the right manner to customers* can be conceived as a dimension to the property *the way we treat customers/dealing with customers* under *processes/systems/methods* under category 1 **structure of customer focus**. However, its meaning is made in context of *there are problem areas*, and accordingly is grouped under the 'barriers/problems' theme.

Illustrative thought units for the 'barriers/problems' theme include,

- for the *restriction /getting caught up/there are constraints* property:

That impinge on how we do that // there are constraints // and feeling a little bit restricted in being able to deal with somebody who doesn't necessarily deserve our help // so you feel a little bit restricted as a result of that. what you can say and what you can do // You get caught up in // its a limitation of what you can do // we are also restricted // I can't see any better ways to improve apart from giving us more staff and more money to run a better program // I think we are a bit management heavy // rather than coming in to just a job every day and to work. you hear "another day. another dollar" //

and unlike business you can be forever challenging things because there is always change // and if we're not doing the right thing.

- for the *there are problem areas/ putting us in the bad spot* property:

And a lot of things haven't yet come to the surface, problems that have been there before // There are pockets of, there are problem areas // and I think it doesn't matter how, what the intentions of the agency or the majority of staff have as far as customer focus goes there will always, well I won't say there will always be problem areas, but it probably relates to cells or individuals rather than an agency or Branch perspective // And it puts us in a bad spot too // but if you're not putting it back across in the right manner to the client I guess there would be a perception of poor service // There may be communication problems // may not be able to get their ideas or thoughts or knowledge across to the client base // and that can be of various reasons, probably cultural springs to mind // because there are those internal kind of conflicts as well // I guess the other aspect is there are areas of, where there is skill lacking as far as the tasks // Which I suppose is difficult in government because there's that lack of competition in certain instances with things that you do // You sort of become a little bit lax I suppose at times with wanting to achieve a higher goal // I think we go a little bit to get a result at any costs sometime, we forget fairness // Well we are doing this because we like doing this because we think it is important, to hell with everybody else // like what we put out in our advertising we sometimes don't mention that there is an administration fee // Toilets that are grotty // pandering too much to very popular tastes // and sticking rigidly and pedantically to sets of rules and procedures, which are important in and of themselves.

- for the *things that concern me greatly/things that this agency does not do* property:

Then that would concern me personally, greatly // if it was not meeting the perceived needs of our clients and customers // I don't feel that our trainees, as well as any new staff that come in to our office, are really trained enough to give out that information // and I'd just don't think the training part of it is enough // I find in this office they have people training staff who haven't actively worked in that position for many, many years and basically have no idea // So I find it's the blind leading the blind // Well, I think it stems down from Management // because I feel Management don't do their job // and personally I don't think Management get involved enough in what goes on in this office, whether it be here or our Head Office // I have worked up at our Head Office for some time as well and I don't feel that Management get involved enough // because volunteers have a shelf life of about three years and then their off.

The 'barriers/problems' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'barriers/problems' theme across the three properties include:

I think for our organisation here, because we're a small group of people, 40 odd people for a State, we don't have the physical human resources // but there's only X amount of us // and this is always what we're saying - we don't have enough time because there's so few of us, we don't have enough people // So we're really physically stretched to supply this service at times // and this is what I find very frustrating in government work // What happens throughout the Ministry, we get new employees coming in, and they'll just come in and they don't tell us who they are, where they're working, what

are they doing here, how did they get there, you know // We have a situation at the moment where we have a particular staff member who has come down from one of our regional offices and is having a very difficult time fitting in.

The 'threats' theme is generated from data grouped under the property, *outsourcing/customer will go elsewhere*. The theme is only weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets. The theme reflects *processes/systems/methods* to the extent that **our understanding of ourselves as providers** includes recognition of the ability of customers to procure services from alternate service providers.

Illustrative thought units for the 'threats' theme include:

Outsourcing is a thing that comes up every now and then // I suppose the ultimate threat with anything is that well, if we can't provide a service then they will go some where else for it // its a very competitive world // and if they don't offer what's wanted, I guess we'd be left behind - if nobody bothered.

The 'poor relationships' theme is generated from data grouped under the property, *there isn't the two way communication between Workers and the managers/managers don't see me as a customer, rather a lackey*. The theme is well supported, represented across four of the six data sets.

The notion of 'poor relationships' comes from the data which suggests **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is related to *processes/systems/methods* of communication, and the way Workers and managers relate together. Response grouped under this theme associate *processes/systems/methods* of communication and the relationship between managers and Workers in a negative sense. Dimensions to the properties are numerous which reflect the wide range of factors contributing to this sense of 'poor relationships'. 'Poor relationships' are expressed in a variety of terms ranging from *Workers are too frightened to speak out* and *Workers feel intimidate later on down the track to people who work in this organisation are hard to get on with* and *people think the only way they can achieve anything is by constantly screaming and shouting*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'poor relationships' theme include:

One division will keep things from the other division // But this is where I think you get false communication // That's where the communication lacks // I think they think its impossible that an attendant, which they consider down the ladder, could possibly know anything to tell them up there // And the lack of communication with the upper Administrative area is sad neglect // but its like a false communication // Well we have it in this organisation a situation where we have the academics and we have the lesser mortals // and that's throws us back on Customer Focus, if there's no real communication in the building itself // It's very difficult to actually have customer

focus when you can't actually contact those people within the museum anyway // they don't actually see me as a customer, they see me as a Level 1 // I don't think there's the two way communication there // because some of their decisions - we would like to have a part of // but then I know a lot of people are too frightened to speak out // because they feel like they will be intimidated later on down the track // because one manager thinks one thing, one says the other // I've never been told anything // I don't think management are aware of the service that I am actually providing.

The 'poor relationships' theme also includes data conveying explicit negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'poor relationships' theme across the five properties include:

The main thing that came out of it [survey] was the intolerance // Just intolerance with some of the staff // where they [managers] think that the only way that they can achieve anything is actually to bully people by constantly screaming and shouting // and literally coming across in a very aggressive manner // Generally just - they're a bit hard to get on with most people are.

The 'relationships' theme is generated from data grouped under three properties, namely *having a good relationship with the people you work with* and *supportive management*. The theme is weakly supported, represented across four of the six data sets.

As with the 'poor relationships' theme, the notion of 'relationships' comes from the data which suggests **our understanding of ourselves as providers** is related to *processes/systems/methods* of communication, and the way Workers and managers relate together. Response grouped the 'relationships' theme associate *processes/systems/methods* of communication, and the relationship between managers and Workers, as an important factor in being customer focused .

Illustrative thought units for the 'relationships' theme include,

- for the *having a good relationship with the people you work with* property:

Being tolerant of your fellow office Workers // Working with others by being tolerant // and I think tolerant is the key word in working with this office // I think it's important that you have a pretty good working relationship with the people you have to work with for a start // Because a lot of, probably all of our jobs rely on other people that we work // so the relations between each division were a lot more clarified and things like that.

- for the *supportive management* property:

Our Manager, Ms X is a Fleet Manager, she always down there // and she's honest // I mean I'm a Level 1, she's a Level 6, but she will come and help me do my work // If you need to get told off, she'll tell you off, if you've done something well, she'll say congratulations and well done // Our managers are quite supportive in terms of the role

we do // and we get very good support from our manager and our acting manager // and their very supportive in terms of what we are doing with our own people.

In comparison, the 'poor relationships' theme emerges stronger than the 'relationships' theme. In other words, in terms of *processes/systems/methods*, Workers are saying that 'poor relationships' is an important factor impacting customer focus.

- *Change* sub category

Change, as a sub category, is moderately supported, represented throughout all data sets. It is strongly related to the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2 **attitudes towards customers** in that both pertain to the phenomenon of change. It differs from the *commitment to change* sub category under category 2 in that *change* is expressed in terms of respondents perceptions of how they have changed in relation to their *understanding of themselves as providers*, as opposed to perceptions of a *commitment to change* in relation to **attitudes towards customers**.

Change contains four properties, with varying dimensions. The four properties emerge as pertaining to two themes. These themes convey a sense of *change* in terms of 'process' and 'mindsets/attitudes'. The 'process' theme contains data pertaining to Worker perceptions of process elements which have changed as a result of becoming customer focused. This includes the two properties, *gearing towards customer focus: changing ways of doing things* and *changing our work practices to give management what they want*. The 'process' theme is moderately supported, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'process' theme include,

- for the *gearing towards customer focus: changing ways of doing things* property:

I think there has been a shift in onus to provide a better customer focus // Well, tuning into and getting into the areas I suppose of what customer focus is all about // I think people are more aware of customer focus // what does the customer need, how can we meet that need - rather than resorting to the Rules and Regulations and processes // think its changed around from you get the service we give you to giving the service that they should get // They [management] are trying to change ways throughout // There is movement // Well from what I've witnessed in recent years its really turned around // But then again, that has also modernised our work practices, made us more efficient // and perhaps the focus is now shifting more towards perhaps Local Government // Again from the new management, I getting a bit tied up here but I can see movement from // because we can see some change but you wonder to what degree // Over the

years, the management focus has changed to // you know what they expect now is different from what they expected some years ago.

- for the *changing our work practices to give management what they want* property:

At the end of the day, the main man at the top decides where the dollars get spent regardless of what the fellow at the bottom is saying // it is just us changing our work practices to give them [TMT] what they want // They [management] direct the overall objective of the organisation // Well once again, they go ahead and make up all these plans and ideas of what they want to do // they're [management] spending dollars on the projects they want to do.

The 'process' theme also includes data conveying explicit positive and negative evaluations. Illustrative thought units of explicit positive evaluations of the 'process' theme across the two properties include:

So I am becoming more aware of it now // obviously I pick more on that side of things // I must admit it has changed over the last six months since our new director // I've noticed a change in the way people are treated in government offices // I mean we had all these training sessions and all these things //

Illustrative thought units of explicit negative evaluations of the 'process' theme across the two properties include:

We haven't concentrated on that area as much as visitor services // Because I've seen very slow movement of change on the whole in government // but its very slow in government.

The notion of change in a 'mindsets/attitudes' sense is generated from data grouped under the two properties *changing the attitude/getting away form the old style mentality of look there's the rules* and *the cultural problem we come first and our customers come second*. Data grouped under the 'mindsets/attitudes' theme is mixed. The property *changing the attitude/getting away form the old style mentality of look there's the rules* contains perceptions that indicate a *change* in 'mindsets/attitudes' has occurred. The property *the cultural problem we come first and our customers come second* contains responses suggesting 'mindsets/attitudes' to have not *changed*. The data attributes 'mindsets/attitudes' as a reason for things not *changing*.

Overall, *change* in terms of the 'mindsets/attitudes' theme is weakly supported, represented across four of the six data sets. Individually, responses suggesting 'mindsets/attitudes' to have not *changed* are more strongly represented than responses suggesting a *change* in 'mindsets/attitudes' to have occurred.

Illustrative thought units for the 'mindsets/attitudes' theme include,

- for the *changing the attitude/getting away from the old style mentality of look there's the rules* property:

That sort of mentality is in my view been, not eliminated, but severally decreased and people are now more in tune // and much less emphases on the organisation and its process // Rather than doing everything for the process of the organisation // turning peoples minds away from concentrating on the internal processes and procedures and structures of an organisation // doing everything to meet the needs of the organisation's processes and procedures and rules and frameworks // because you get away from the old style mentality of 'look there's the rules, we'll just apply the rules and we'll deal with you whenever, take a number and wait sort of thing' // I think he [CEO] has got a lot to achieve to get through to some of our academics here who still sort of, in my own mind or my words would be living in the nineteenth century.

- for the *cultural problem/we come first and our customers come second* property:

And we keep turning it around, the culture in this organisation is that 'we come first and our customers come second' // We tend to put more emphasis on internal requirements // and ad hoc information being generated to the internal // which is nice to know stuff rather than must know at the expense of servicing our customers // We're here to service the public and we look after ourselves when we get the chance // I think the other thing is there's a cultural problem in that we have an allegiance to our organisation first and its internal requirements rather than customer focus // and yes every body was suppose to come out of that thinking 'yes we're going to go in and we're going to implement these things' // Well I've been with the Board for 12 years and the focus has fairly well stayed the same // What is going on with customer focus? Well nothings changes // I didn't see anything changing dramatically from my point of view // So I didn't see, once our customer focus came out in a formal sense, I didn't see anything changing dramatically from what we've always been doing // I don't think we are achieving at all what we should be achieving // although in government we're always talking about managing change but there doesn't seem to be the same kind of immediacy // On the whole its easier for people just to say well you know, this is what, how it is // So as a whole I don't think it has changed much since the actual charter has come into effect.

General comment on our understanding of ourselves as providers category

Strongly represented throughout the data are responses about customer focus as pertaining to **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In terms of *purpose and role*, the data suggests four differing themes, termed 'general', 'not shared', 'balancing' and 'talked about'. *Purpose and role* under the themes of 'general' and 'not shared' are the most robust. **Our understanding of ourselves as providers** is strongly related to *process/systems and methods*. *Process/systems and methods* also emerges from the data in terms of themes. These themes are 'non commitment',

'commitment', 'barriers/problems', 'threats', 'poor relationships' and 'relationships'. *Processes/systems/methods* under the theme of 'non commitment' is the most robust, followed by responses grouped under the theme of 'poor relationships'. **Our understanding of ourselves as providers** appears to be moderately related with the notion of *change*. *Change* is represented in terms of themes, namely 'process' and 'mindsets/attitudes'. *Change* under the theme of 'process' pertains to actions in the sense of *improving* and *getting the best results*. *Change* under the theme of 'mindsets/attitudes' indicates mixed meanings. On the one hand, a *change* in 'mindsets/attitudes' is associated with acting in a customer focus way. On the other hand, current 'mindsets/attitudes' are attributed as a cause for things not *changing*.

Category 5 - Perceptions of customer focus

Perceptions of customer focus as a category is comprised of two sub categories. The category is strongly represented throughout the data. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 7.5 details the sub categories and properties for the **perceptions of customer focus** category.

TABLE 7.5: Summary of Findings for the Perceptions of Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Government customer focus program	Positive
	Negative
Top Management Team	TMT are yes men/TMT have no real back bone/TMT hold up the process TMT don't deal with customers/TMT are in their little ivory towers TMT are not customer focused/TMT are not interested/TMT don't care
	Difficult to say/don't know
	Have a high opinion of TMT/TMT dedicated to customer focus/TMT can't do any better than what they're already doing TMT are very much customer focused/TMT are very interested in servicing the customer TMT trying to be customer focused/TMT are OK from what I see/TMT would like to do more

- *Government customer focus program* sub category

The *government customer focus program* sub category is comprised of two properties. Dimensions of these properties are various reflecting a diversity of

perspectives on the *governments customer focus program* amongst respondents. The sub category is only minimally represented throughout the data.

Properties and dimensions of the *government customer focus program* sub category pertain to two themes, 'positive' and 'negative'. The 'positive' and 'negative' themes relate to the *positive* and *negative* properties respectively. Both properties are comprised of a range of dimensions highlighting different elements to the *government customer focus program* which contribute to either the 'positive' or 'negative' views. Although the themes are only minimally supported throughout the data, 'positive' views are more strongly represented than 'negative' ones.

Dimensions of the 'positive' theme range for *potential for something good to come from it* and *we had to have customer focus to reminding us what is expected and reminding us who are customers are*. Dimensions of the 'negative' theme range from *its flavour of the month stuff* and *having to comply with another fad* to *haven't paid much attention to it and it could be over applied and time consuming*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include:

I see more positives than negatives // but there is potential for something coming out of this which is great, in terms of customer focus // I think perhaps we're all aware or perhaps reminded of what our customer was - or who our customer was // I guess is that we were reminded who our customer was // the best thing about customer focus is we were reminded about what our core job is, what are we all about // I think it [customer focus] makes us work to the best of our ability // So it [customer focus] keeps us in line // Well customer focus is I guess is something that an agency has to have // I think its [customer focus] starting to work // well I guess it keeps us knowing what the public want really in park, that sort of thing // I think its [customer focus] essential // Meeting nice people // I really can't see any bad aspects about it [customer focus] // I can't think of any bad or worst aspect of customer focus.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include:

That it becomes trendy to do this and trendy to do that [customer focus] // I guess there would be a perception out there of that and having to comply with yet "fad" // by fad I mean a management fad // yet another process that I can't see the benefits as an individual // and it [customer focus] will go away anyway // But certainly from looking at what goes on in the ministry, again the impression I get is that its, that you know it was flavour of the month // but I haven't paid really that much attention to it // Well I'm not in a really public part of the Gallery, so it is not as a big area of mine // It [customer focus] can interrupt other important work that you may be doing for the Gallery // in that it could be inefficient and time consuming // like a lot of good ideas, they can be over-applied or over enthusiastic // I've not seen anything branded "customer focus" from the Art Gallery // I haven't really been involved in any customer focus though.

- *Top Management Team* sub category

The *Top Management Team* sub category is comprised of seven properties. The properties emerge as pertaining to three themes. These themes as referred to as 'positive', 'undecided' and 'negative'.

The 'positive' theme includes responses that suggest *Top Management Teams* as being customer focused. In other words, the 'positive' theme groups data pertaining to Worker perceptions that view *Top Management Teams* in a positive light in terms of the customer focus exhibit by them. The 'positive' theme is strongly supported, represented across all data groups.

Grouped under the 'positive' theme are the three properties *have a high opinion of TMT/TMT dedicated to customer focus* *TMT can't do any better than what they're already doing*, *TMT are very much customer focused* *TMT are very interested in servicing the customer* and *TMT trying to be customer focused* *TMT are OK from what I see* *TMT would like to do more*. The data indicates *Top Management Teams* are viewed positively by respondents against these properties, which includes the dimensions *always pacify those people is they happen to be aggressive* and *I think the TMT make a big effort for their customers*

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include,

- for the *have a high opinion of TMT/TMT dedicated to customer focus* *TMT can't do any better than what they're already doing* property:

Like from what I see with other areas the museum is really dedicated to upholding its level of Customer Focus // I think their [TMT] fairly dedicated in what they do // I've got a fairly high opinion of all of them // but I think the higher people have a very high standard of wanting Customer Focus than the lower people do.

- for the *TMT are very much customer focused* *TMT are very interested in servicing the customer* property:

As a group up in here I think that they [TMT] are very, very interested in customer focus // So I think they doing a good job actually // Well in my area I think its quite good // and its a very concerned effort // I think they [TMT] are customer focused // so yes, I believe they're very much customer focused // I think our Management looks at it very closely and takes it very seriously // Because they are in there implementing what the customer focus charter wants us to do // I think our director has got a very good understanding of customer focus // And then the management that I personally have to deal with seem very customer orientated // The fact that we have the Public Education Officer here would suggest that we treat it [customer focus] as being very, very

important // but they are very interested in the person being well treated // most of the managers here are pretty good at encouraging staff to treat people properly and to do a good job and to be efficient and get the job done quickly // But the people [TMT] I deal with mainly are great // and creating those relationships with our customers that our customer focus charter suggest // So keeping our customers and our stakeholders informed of what's happening with that has been a priority for our Management // That's for my manager he gives out, he's a people person you know // I'm not left with a feeling of having been put down or belittled because obviously I'm at a much lower level // They're showing that they can relate to people effectively, or relate to me effectively // They [TMT] give the public all the time they want and that works well when they do // Managers always pacify those people if they happen to be aggressive // I think that, once again, for the amount of people we have got they do a good job // But I don't feel its humanly possible to be more effective than that's what they've been, quite honestly.

- for the *TMT trying to be customer focused/TMT are OK from what I see/TMT would like to do more property:*

That [TMT] they recognise and they do address customer focus // I think their endeavoring to be more client focused as well // So I think their endeavoring to provide a better service as well // and there's from my perspective, they try and lead by example // they [TMT] give the impression that they do listen // but I know they'd like to do a lot better // they've [TMT] actually got more, you know they've got research, they've got personal management and that to them sort of has its role // I guess in a nutshell I'm satisfied or happy with the way I see it in dealing with customer focus and the customers // Generally I haven't got any problems // I haven't got any problems with the way they deal with customer focus // I think the management level is pretty good in dealing, I think they have enough contact with the customers // I guess in a nutshell I'm satisfied or happy with the way I see it in dealing with customer focus and the customers // I haven't got any problems with the way they deal with customer focus.

The 'negative' theme includes responses that suggest *Top Management Teams* as not being customer focused. In other words, the 'negative' theme groups data pertaining to Worker perceptions that view *Top Management Teams* in a negative light in terms of the customer focus exhibit by them. The 'negative' theme is moderately supported, represented across all data groups.

Grouped under the 'negative' theme are the three properties *TMT are yes men/TMT have no real back bone/TMT hold up the process, TMT don't deal with customers/TMT are in their little ivory towers/ TMT don't feel that they are their to do service to the public* and *TMT are not customer focused/TMT are not interested/TMT don't care*. The data indicates *Top Management Teams* are viewed negatively by respondents against these properties, which includes the dimensions *getting caught up in the bureaucracy* and *TMT don't feel that they are their to do service to the public*

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include,

- for the *TMT are yes men/TMT have no real back bone/TMT hold up the process* property:

They [TMT] certainly try and, or play by the book // management - yes men // If you ask them a question, they'll say yes to you but then they go around and say no to somebody else // There's no real backbone in our Management other than Ms X // but the rest of the Management, yes men and spineless really // I would say that they are not coordinated in their efforts // and so you've gone ahead and done it and you get into trouble for it // but then there are a few others again who are holding up the process // I wouldn't say it is completely customer focused // But sometimes they can get tied up in the bureaucracy I suppose.

- for the *TMT don't deal with customers/TMT are in their little ivory towers/TMT don't feel that they are there to do service to the public* property:

I can't see the Management looking at the public, what the public want // but they are probably not as involved in the day to day provision of start times, like some of the other staff // I guess you could say, they [TMT] live in an ivory tower // not having a great deal to do with the customers from day to day // But I think probably higher up, I don't really know whether they really know what's going on // I get the impression they don't really know from day to day what's happening in the real world // I think the Management has already made up their minds what they want to do and they do that // but you know, from what they're doing down their end and from what we're doing from up our end are two different issues // but they are involved in customer focus if they actually bother to put on exhibitions.

- for the *TMT are not customer focused/TMT are not interested TMT don't care* property:

Very poor // But I think that the executive management haven't dealt with and in some degree refuse to deal with that type of area // Our Management, how long is the tape // Our management, the Bushfires Board, is not the best // There are – some people I think just get tied up in what they are doing // and it was the lack of a vision // With the managers, in the past they have tended to sort of demand information immediately // sort of drop everything that you are doing even if it is something important for another area // I don't think they [TMT] care // nobody's interested // But I think a lot of them [TMT] feel that the public are more of a hindrance and a nuisance // Well I guess one third of them [TMT], there are three, or maybe a quarter - half of them have a good understanding of what is a "delighted customer" might be // The way I think about it now, they [TMT] only have got one thing on their mind is to raise money. Management went too greedy on them [customers] // it's the people who raise the money, not the Management // And unless the Management help the people, the people won't help the management.

In comparison, the 'positive' theme is more strongly supported than the 'negative' theme. 'Positive' perceptions of *Top Management Teams* are represented across the data twice as many times as 'negative' perceptions.

Data grouped under the 'undecided' theme includes responses which gives no clear sense of Worker perceptions of *Top Management Team* in terms of customer focus. One property is grouped under the 'undecided' theme, *difficult to say/don't know*. The 'undecided' theme is weakly supported, however is represented across all data groups.

Illustrative thought units for the 'undecided' theme include:

I don't know what they [TMT] do // Well I don't really know what they [TMT] do about it // so whether their good or bad. I'd be unaware // but I don't know what they do to achieve customer focus themselves // I don't see a lot of them at work // We rarely see their faces, we rarely hear their voices // I don't get to deal with top management as much as I use to // It would be difficult to be objective // It couldn't have got much worse five years ago.

General comment on perceptions of customer focus category

Emerging from the data is the notion of customer focus being influenced by respondents perceptions on the *governments customer focus program* and **perceptions of customer focus** as exhibited by *Top Management Teams*. Responses concerning **perceptions of customer focus** as exhibited by *Top Management Teams* are strongly represented throughout the data. 'Positive' perceptions are more strongly represented than 'negative' perceptions. Responses concerning perceptions of *the government customer focus program* are moderately represented throughout the data. Once again, 'positive' perceptions are more strongly represented than 'negative' perceptions. Overall, responses indicate to hold more 'positive' **perceptions of customer focus**.

Category 6 - Customer factors impacting on customer focus

Customer factors impacting on customer focus as a category is comprised of three sub categories. The category is moderately represented throughout the data. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 7.6 details the sub categories and properties for the **customer factors impacting on customer focus** category.

TABLE 7.6: Summary of Findings for the Customer Factors Impacting on Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Customer types	Internals/agency staff Externals/other government agencies Internals and externals/variety of customers
Customer behaviours and abilities	Various Sources of frustration Things which change my attitude towards customers/factors where I tend not to give the best service
Perceived customer status	List of priority customers/ requests for service through the Minister or TMT get absolutely top service

- *Customer types* sub category

Customer types, as a sub category, is comprised of three properties. These properties reflect differences in perspectives of who customers are. No clear picture emerges as to what is a *customer*. Rather, *customer types* are various depending upon the context in which they are referred to. In some instances, *customers* are referred to as individuals *external* to the organisation who are in need of a service. In other contexts, *customers* include fellow Workers, termed *internals*. Further still, *customers types* include both *internals and externals*.

The sub category is weakly represented across all data sets. Of the three properties, *external/other government agencies* is the most supported, represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *customer types* sub category include,

- for the *internals/agency staff* property:

Like people from other branches and other divisions // my fellow work colleagues are my customers as well // which is our client, agency client // Well my other colleagues internally.

- for the *externals/other government agencies* property:

For the community, for visitors, for tourists // well basically it means to me that the public are our customers // we get school groups coming through, so the school groups // Its always been the volunteers // lets say its Local Government // So to us its the public, its the community // right through to the Minister // to people out in the

community // we've got the Office of the Public Sector Standards Commission, the Anti-Corruption Commission, the Ombudsman and Government House and the Salaries Allowances Tribunal // We are looking at other customers we have who are the artists and the community // And our customers range from pre-primary school kids right through to seniors.

- for the *internals and externals/variety of customers* property:

And that's based internally and externally // Not only external customers but say internal ones as well // to our, inside and outside, customers // both within the organisation and to the customers outside it // whether that's internal customer or external customer // I guess, you know, we have both // And again throughout the Government I am talking about internal and external customers // and obviously its quite broad for us // We do have a variety // I've got a lot of customers.

- *Customer behaviours and abilities*

Customer behaviours and abilities, as a sub category, is comprised of three properties termed *various*, *sources of frustration* and *things which change my attitude towards customers/factors where I tend not to give the best service*. The sub category is moderately supported, represented across five of the six data sets. The sub category suggests that *customer behaviours and abilities* are a factor influencing the type of service provided by respondents.

Dimensions grouped under the *various* property pertain to differing attributes of customers. These attributes include *people coming to the counter*, *customers who come here regularly* and *customers who haven't been here before*. This property is weakly supported, represented across five of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

On a personal level, they come in over the counter // they come in on the general advice lines // and you have got phone calls and people coming in // But then on the other hand you also get people who come here who have been coming regularly or haven't been here before // Very often they're not use to coming to places like that // and overcoming that with and they were actually two disabled couples.

Dimensions pertaining to the properties, *sources of frustration* and *things which change my attitude towards customers/factors where I tend not to give the best service*, are also concerned with particular attributes of customers, except in these contexts, a 'negative' evaluation is associated with the attribute. Dimensions across the two properties are similar, however are placed under either property depending whether the dimension is expressed in terms of a *source of frustration* or a *factor which changes my attitude towards customers*. Emerging as the most important

attribute associated with a 'negative' evaluation of *customer behaviours and abilities* is the notion of *grumpy, irritate customers/customers who are pests*.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include,

- for the *sources of frustration* property:

Its out of our control // but we can't be everywhere around the park all at once // it all goes totally sort of negative then // I'd probably be inhuman if I said that everybody didn't effect me // And that can be a source of conflict // so it can be frustrating // and we get lots of vehicle break-ins // and that you are able to provide a fully guaranteed answer // where as perhaps in a different situation or other organisations or perhaps private enterprise I suppose I was saying, you would be quite within your rights to say "excuse me, I don't want to deal with you any more and see you later" // trying to smooth ruffled feathers // and I suppose in the customer service side of things it means that you have to be nice and friendly to them [aggressive customers] // having to be pleasant when they are being very unreasonable // Having to deal with people that are having a bad day, for want of a better word // there are certain customers that you just can't sometimes help.

- for the *things which change my attitude towards customers/factors where I tend not to give the best service* property:

Also sort of changes my attitude to them as well // it also effects the way I provide them with a service // I tend to not give them the best service // Well when people walk in, very often they don't give you eye contact // I mean its, some people are negative // and often decent people who are abrasive people when they come // because they can be quite rude // The person who is determined to be ugly // One who wants to put you right // And there are always difficult people // I mean some of them can be quite offensive // Getting grumpy, irritated customers // so they tend to take out their frustrations on us // One who wants to tell you, 'you don't know your job' because you're not providing what they want // That they liked it 10 years ago the way it was and they don't like it the way it is today // I'm not an aggressive person myself and I don't like it // because we get the same ones who'll come back and they come back and terrorise us really with meaningless stuff sometimes.

Overall, *customer behaviours and abilities* conveying a negative evaluation are more strongly represented across the data than non-evaluative responses. In other words, negative *customer behaviours and abilities* emerge as important phenomenon that influence the way respondents deal with their customers.

- *Perceived customer status*

Perceived customer status, as a sub category, pertains to responses suggesting customers are not all viewed as being equal. The sub category is represented by one property, *list of priority customers/requests for service through the Minister or TMT*

get absolutely top service. The property suggests some customers are perceived to be more important than others. Dimensions pertaining to *requests for service through the Minister or TMT get absolutely top service* suggests some customers as exerting a controlling influence over services providers.

The sub category is weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets. In other words, *perceived customer status*, although emerging as important, is not a well shared view across the data.

Illustrative thought units for the *list of priority customers/ requests for service through the Minister or TMT get absolutely top service* property include:

I've even got a list in my office that if I have 10 phone calls to return, I have a list of who gets priority // and the bloke at the fire base gets priority even, at this time of the year, to the Minister // So that's what I mean, I go for the grass roots bloke out there whose put his life on the line and the Minister can wait // To me its a priority, a priority list there // So that when you get calls from volunteers, you've sort of got to prioritise in your mind, well yes they are part of Local Government // I'm probably more conscious of the hierarchy's internal customers who I would consider to be myself and my work colleagues // and its that old adage you know like if you get it to us in writing, if you go through the Minister, if you go through the Minister you get absolutely top service // but if you come through the normal way, you still get top service but you get its, no one jumps the queue sort of thing // But as soon as anything has got a ministerial on it, or comes from a manager or anything like that, it gets a priority.

General comment on customer factors impacting on customer focus category

Emerging from the data are three key **customer factors impacting on customer focus**. The most supported factor is the notion of *customer behaviours and abilities*. Most strongly represented under the customer *behaviours and abilities* sub category are dimensions that convey negative evaluations of particular customer attributes. These negative evaluations are grouped under the properties *sources of frustration* and *things which change my attitude towards customers/factors where I tend not to give the best service*. *Customer types* emerges as the next most supported sub category. This *sub category* is moderately represented throughout the data, with varying and often conflicting properties. In other words, there is no clear sense for what is a *customer*. The least represented **customer factor impacting on customer focus** is *perceived customer status*. The data suggests some customer types receive better servicing than others.

Category 7 - Finding out about customers

Finding out about customers as a category is comprised of two sub categories. Each sub category is defined by a number of properties. Table 7.7 details the sub categories and properties for the **finding out about customers** category.

TABLE 7.7: Summary of Findings for the Finding Out About Customers Category

Sub category	Property
Communication and building relationships	The communication thing/the two way thing
	Give and take relationship/working more effectively because you have good rapport
Processes/systems/methods	Getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers
	On an individual basis finding out what customers want
	Evaluation/measuring
	Customers soon let you know/rarely do you have to ask customers

- *Communication and building relationships* sub category

Communication and building relationships, as a sub category, is comprised of two properties, labeled *the communication thing/the two way thing* and *give and take relationship/working more effectively because you have good rapport*. The data suggests *communication and building relationships* as essential elements in **finding out about customers**. Associated with the responses is a positive evaluation from having *good communication* and *good relationships* with customers. Overall, the sub category is weakly supported, however is represented across all data sets.

Illustrative thought units of *communication and building relationships* sub category include,

- *for the communication thing/the two way thing* property:

A communication process between us and our customers // So its a 2-way thing // That's obviously the key, to me its the key element - communication // because customer service is obviously a real communication thing // we're feeding them information as they require it and they are giving us ideas on how to improve // Again it comes back to the communication thing I guess // and a good communication thing with your customers going // Because how would serve a customer if you could not communicate.

- for the *give and take relationship/working more effectively because you have good rapport* property:

Well obviously you work more effectively because you have a good rapport // because you are always going to get much more co-operation // I think the better the relationship with the customer, probably the more effective your whole organisation would be // So that's, its how do you call it, its a give and take relationship // You know we have established good relationships with say customers that we deal with in our branch or at a motor vehicle level, like peak industry bodies like the motor trade association // Everything works better // you get your feedback quicker // or if you're asking for something, you always get a response quicker // whereas perhaps some of them may take three days before someone will get back to you.

- *Processes/systems/methods*

Processes/systems/methods, as a sub category, is comprised of four properties. The sub category is moderately supported throughout the data. Individually, the properties are supported to varying degrees. The properties emerge as pertaining to two themes, labeled 'pro-active' and 'reactive'.

The 'pro-active' theme is generated from data grouped under the properties, *getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers, on an individual basis finding out what customers want* and *evaluation/measuring*. The data is said to convey a sense of 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* in that dimensions pertain to actions which respondents actively undertake by themselves.

Of the three properties grouped under the *processes/systems/methods* sub category, *getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers* is the most robust, represented across all data sets. Dimensions of this property are wide ranging reflecting different *processes/systems/methods* used by participating organisations in *finding things out about customers*. Dimensions include *customer surveys* and *establishing process to monitor and obtain feedback*. *On an individual basis finding out what customers want* is the least supported property, represented across only two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the 'pro-active' theme include,

- for the *getting feedback from customers/encouraging input from your customers* property:

We get feedback that that's actually what they want // they certainly let us know if we're not giving them what they actually want // We try to get a lot of feedback from

people that have come to the Park for functions // We ask the visitors when they come to the Park // we try to ask most of the visitors // I can give you a small issue. I find it very important from our clients that we have got to get feedback // You need to have proper feedback of what they really want // 'what do you think of this, do you think we could charge people next year and what sort of music would you like to see' and this sort of thing // what they like to do, where they like to go, their favourite spot in the Park // like if they had any problems that there might have been at the time // what are we doing that they know about, that we can improve.

- for the *on an individual basis finding out what customers want* property:

Well to me just being able to get out there everyday and meet them // And on a one to one basis // and on an individual basis. obviously just asking them what they want, finding out their background // find out whether they're happy with what they're offered or improvements that could be made // that helps me as an individual get an understanding of how they feel about the place.

- for the *evaluation/measuring* property:

Yeah well we have surveys // and someone went round there with a questionnaire // So finding out, "are they happy with what we give, do they want more" // finding out what people are happy with, not happy with // we do surveys sometimes // you've got the customer feed back forms and things like that // and establishing a process where we can monitor and obtain feedback from our customers // to see how we are traveling as far as customer service goes. the level of service and what levels we've reached, if we are deficient in any areas and that sort of thing.

The 'reactive' theme is generated from data grouped under the property, *customers soon let you know/rarely do you have to ask customers*. The data is said to convey a sense of 'reactive' *processes/systems/methods* in that dimensions pertain to actions initiated by customers. Data grouped under the 'reactive' theme is weakly supported, represented across one data set.

Illustrative thought units for the 'reactive' theme under the *customers soon let you know/rarely do you have to ask customers* property include:

They [customers] soon let you know // Very rarely you have to ask // they [customers] approach you // and they'll either ask the questions or make suggestions.

General comment on finding out about customers category

The picture emerges of customer focus as pertaining to **finding out about customers**. **Finding out about customers** translates most strongly in terms of *processes/systems/methods*. *Processes/systems/methods* emerges in two senses, termed 'pro-active' and 'reactive'. Of the two, 'pro-active' *processes/systems/methods* emerge more strongly than 'reactive' types. Emerging weakly is a relationship

between **finding out about customers**, and *communication and building relationships*.

Category 8 - Organisational factors impacting on customer focus

Organisational factors impacting on customer focus as a category is comprised of seven sub categories. The sub categories are weakly represented throughout the data sets to varying degrees. While some sub categories are represented across all data sets, others emerge across only one. Sub categories are defined by a number of properties. Table 7.8 details the sub categories and properties for the **organisational factors impacting on customer focus** category.

TABLE 7.8: Summary of Findings for the Organisational Factors Impacting on Customer Focus Category

Sub category	Property
Resources and capacity	Having the capacity to deliver
	Not having the capacity to deliver TMT are asking Workers to do twice as much work with half as much time and staff/everything is run on a shoe string
Relationships	Having a complete organisation/ the dynamic thing TMT are customer focused towards staff
	TMT are not customer focused towards staff/ there's a total lack of confidence in the TMT
Perceived purpose and role of government agencies	Various
Staff/comportment of our people	Various
Involvement and commitment	I've been involved quite extensively/having the right intentions
	Workers are the ones actually implementing what the TMT come out with
Management culture and role	Various
Structure	Various

- *Resources and capacity* sub category

Resources and capacity as a sub category is weakly supported, represented across all data sets. The sub category is concerned with responses pertaining to human and physical resources required for service delivery. The sub category is strongly related to properties pertaining to *resources and capacity* grouped under the 'barriers/problems' theme of *processes/systems/methods* under category 4 **our**

understanding of ourselves as providers. Responses are grouped under different categories depending upon the way in which *resources and capacity* are talked about. Under category 4, responses concerned with *resources and capacity* are conveyed as pertaining to *processes/systems/methods* in terms of **our understanding of ourselves as providers**. In contrast, responses grouped under category 8 convey a broad sentiment about *resources and capacity* as being an *organisational factor impacting on customer focus*. The importance of the sub category is the link established between *resources and capacity* in general terms as an **organisational factor impacting on customer focus** and more specifically, as an element of *processes/systems/methods* which is viewed as a 'barrier/problem' to customer focus.

Three properties emerge for the sub category. The three properties emerge as pertaining to two themes, termed 'enabling' and 'restraining'.

The 'enabling' theme is generated from data under the property *having the capacity to deliver*. Dimensions to this property are principally concerned with staff numbers required to deliver the services offered by participating agencies. The data suggests that resourcing levels are sufficient to deliver the services demanded of them.

Illustrative thought units for the *having the capacity to deliver* property include:

We're finding that we're getting more done with less staff // and I guess having the resources to provide them with what they want // we are doing that very well as far as I am concerned // because they're (TMT) working more effectively // as far as your given area of responsibility goes.

The 'restraining' theme is generated from data grouped under the two properties *not having the capacity to deliver* and *TMT are asking Workers to do twice as much work with half as much time and staff/ everything is run on a shoe string*. As with responses grouped under the 'enabling' theme, dimensions to the properties grouped under the 'restraining' theme are principally concerned with staff numbers required to deliver the services offered by participating agencies. However, the theme of 'restraining' is applied as the data suggests resourcing levels are not sufficient to deliver the services required of them.

Illustrative thought units for the 'restraining theme' include,

- for the *not having the capacity to deliver* property:

I think the agency itself has problems in that we are very under staffed at the bottom // We don't have enough staff to tell them why it is done and where it has come from //

when they come to us and they say "I'm looking for this and this and this", can we actually provide that service // And I think we've got to realise that we are a very small agency // and seriously analyse what our role is and then provide that service.

- for the *TMT* are asking *Workers* to do twice as much work with half as much time and staff/ everything is run on a shoe string property:

We're all willing to do the work but we can't do it if we don't have the hours or the manpower to actually get there // but there almost asking us to do twice as much work with half as much time and power // I think, limited resources // Okay in my job I would say that we don't have the money to do the kinds of things that would be helpful // And a lot of the time its because of restrictions in funding // and yet, the old coin you know keeps turning up 'not enough money, not enough dollars' // it is harder and harder probably to service people // I mean as our resources become less and less // We just don't have the human resources to do that // But funding is always a problem // So everything is kind of run on a shoe string // So that because we are a, lets say, a lean organisation.

Although individually the properties are weakly supported, responses conveying a 'restraining' sense are more strongly represented and accordingly, emerge as more important to *Workers*.

- *Relationships* sub category

Relationships, as a sub category, is weakly supported, represented across four of the six data sets. It is strongly related to the sub category *communication and relationships* under category 3 - **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. Both sub categories suggest customer focus as pertaining to a type of *relationship*. The sub categories are located under different categories as *relationships* are associated either with customers (**customer understanding of ourselves as providers**), or amongst staff (this category).

Relationships is comprised of three properties, with varying dimensions. The three properties emerge as pertaining to three themes, labeled 'non evaluative', 'positive' and 'negative'. The 'non evaluative' theme is generated from data grouped under the property *having the complete organisation/the dynamic thing*. The responses suggest customer focus to be associated with organisations characterised by a number of attributes. Attributes of a customer focused organisation as indicated by the data include *everybody is continually learning from the process, having good recruitment, where good training and development is ongoing and where the Worker is treated as a valuable commodity*. The responses are said to convey a 'non evaluative' sense in that the attributes do not appear to apply to the organisations that respondents work for.

Illustrative thought units for the 'non evaluative' theme include:

And that can only be done with an organisation that is a complete organisation // Its a dynamic thing in an organisation // and that process should be in a government organisation as well as a successful business // where everybody is inter-related // and your continually learning in the process // It needs good recruitment, good training and development is ongoing // now the Worker is treated as a valuable commodity.

The 'positive' theme is generated from data under the property *TMT are customer focused towards staff*. Dimensions to this property explicitly suggest a customer focus relationship to exist between Top Management Teams and Workers. The 'positive' theme is represented by one response. It is important to the extent that it emerges in only one data set.

Illustrative thought units for the 'positive' theme include:

Customer focus with the Workers I think is really good, particularly in our section.

The 'negative' theme is generated from data under the property *TMT are not customer focused towards staff/there's a total lack of confidence in the TMT*. Dimensions to this property explicitly suggest there is no customer focus relationship between Top Management Teams and Workers. The lack of a customer focus relationship, as suggested by the data, is attributable to Workers lack of confidence in Top Management Teams.

Illustrative thought units for the 'negative' theme include:

I think that the Executive could show greater participation in some of the staff meetings for instance // I don't think its [customer focus] a priority to them // I don't think they [TMT] are customer focus to us // you are just there to do the job // they [TMT] don't give us the same service // I think they should [be customer focused] because really we are a customer as well ourselves so // There's a total lack of confidence almost in a number of people // and generally just a - I don't know - the whole, its just a bad situation // none of them [TMT] can sort of agree // they [TMT] shaft each other // you have staff that think that because where they are, that they owe them or can be spoken to in a manner that quite frankly I believe is totally inappropriate for a person in senior management // I mean that's Management, you're just staff // and I don't think they [TMT] really believe that our job is as difficult as it is or as is seen.

Although individually the properties are weakly supported, responses conveying a 'negative' sense are more strongly represented than those conveying either a 'positive' or 'non evaluative' sense.

- *Perceived purpose and role of government agencies* sub category

Perceived purpose and role of government agencies, as a sub category, is comprised of one category termed *various*. Dimensions of the *various* property are numerous reflecting a diversity in meaning of the *perceived purpose and role of government agencies* amongst respondents. These dimensions range from *government doesn't seem to have the same immediacy* and *government is not as dynamic* to *I have some misgivings about commercialisation of government* and *government not set up to make a profit*. One theme emerging from the data is the notion that *government agencies seem to operate differently to private businesses* in terms of different responsibilities and obligations. The sub category is weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

I think government should have enormous dignity because it is representing the people // I'm not talking about government being a corporatisation, God forbid, because then the representation of the people will go // Ultimately a business is different to government because a government is there to serve the people // But there are obligations on us // I seem to feel there's a concern whether a government should work on business lines // And it [government] doesn't seem to have the same kind of accountability as a business // whereas often in government because there isn't that same immediacy // Its not dynamic in the same way as a business // Well I think that, its first of all important for Government agencies to lift their game // because I think in previous years Government agencies have not been held in high esteem // I suppose there's that sort of conception of Government bureaucracy as being fairly slow moving // we're not set up to make a profit.

- *Staff/comportment of our people* sub category.

The *staff/comportment of our people* sub category is comprised of one category termed *various*. Dimensions of the *various* property are numerous reflecting a diversity in perspectives of Worker attributes which influence customer focus. Worker attributes, as perceived by Workers, that influence customer focus include *with people having jobs for long time you end up with a stagnation of thought*, *Workers need to be perceptive and understanding of customers* and *TMT are more qualified than previous people*. The property is weakly supported, represented across three data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

People can end up having jobs for a long period of time and you get a stagnation of thought // and the Management we have got in place, seem to be far more professional // I think that although there's a lot more knowledge around with them [TMT] // you know their a lot more highly qualified than previous people who were putting together things in days gone by // They needed to be perceptive of people // I guess being - an element of being perceptive and understanding // Understanding that people are individuals.

- *Involvement and commitment* sub category

The *involvement and commitment* sub category is comprised of two properties, termed *I've been involved quite extensively/having the right intentions* and *Workers are the ones actually implementing what the TMT come out with*. Both properties are similar in that responses pertain to *involvement and commitment*. The sub category is weakly supported. The *I've been involved quite extensively/having the right intentions* property is represented across two of the six data sets while the *Workers are the ones actually implementing what the TMT come out with* property is represented across one.

Involvement and commitment is strongly related to sub categories of the same name in category 2 - **attitudes towards customers** and category 3 - **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**. The sub categories are concerned with the notions of consultation, involvement and communication. The sub categories are located under different categories as the *involvement and commitment* is associated either with customers (category 2 - **attitudes towards customers**), systems and methods of consultation and communication (category 3 - **customer understanding of ourselves as providers**) or staff (this category).

Illustrative thought units for the *I've been involved quite extensively/having the right intentions* property include:

Even people who have the right intentions as far as customer focus goes // and again being new. I've been involved quite extensively in the Taskforce // so I know a little bit more about client focus and all those sorts of things than what other people might know so // probably a little bit of an advantage there // I had a little bit of involvement with the customer service council.

Illustrative thought units for the *Workers are the ones actually implementing what the TMT come out with* property include:

I think when it comes to people doing the work, mainly the people doing the work at the bottom are the ones that have the most customer contact // but its the people at the bottom that actually are doing it // OK, so this is sort of a look into like everyday, because your on the ground floor dealing with people all the time // most of them [customers] are dealt with by the people at the bottom.

- *Management culture and role* sub category

The *management culture and role* sub category is comprised of one category termed *various*. Dimensions of the *various* property are numerous reflecting a diversity in meaning of *management culture and role* amongst respondents. No clear picture emerges as to what the *management culture and role* is. Rather, the data contains numerous perspectives from *deal with strategic issues* and *management is concerned in the service that the customer requires to management evaluate what the customer requires* and *management evaluate the service I provide*. The sub category is important to the extent that it suggests the *management culture and role* as being distinct to other members of the organisation. The *various* property is weakly supported, represented across two of the six data sets.

Illustrative thought units for the *various* property include:

The TMT are dealing with the policies strategically // That they [TMT] evaluate the services that we provide // that they [TMT] evaluate what the customer wants // but their job is really to portray what we want to do to the cabinet or to the minister // Well they [TMT] represent us in a higher level.

- *Structure* sub category

The *structure* sub category is comprised of one property termed *various*. The sub category is weakly supported, represented across three of the six data sets. The property contains responses concerning the formal organisational *structure*. Dimensions of the *various* property reflect different perspectives on the relationship between the organisational *structure* and the phenomenon of customer focus. Dimensions range from *the upper crust has grown like you wouldn't believe while the ground staff has suffered cutbacks* and *having autonomy in the role you play in the organisation*.

Illustrative thought units of the *various* property include:

The upper crust has grown like you wouldn't believe and the ground shirts, as I refer to them now, the ground staff has suffered cutbacks like you wouldn't believe // this is a bone of contention amongst a lot of the Workers // having autonomy within the role that you play within that part of it // And I think that's very difficult to get.

General comment on organisational factors impacting on customer focus category

Appearing throughout the data are a number of **organisational factors impacting on customer focus**. *Resources and capacity* emerges as the most important factor. Overall, data conveying a 'restraining' sense in terms of *capacity to deliver* the services demanded of them is supported more strongly than data conveying an 'enabling' sense. *Relationships* is the next most represented factor. The data contains more 'negative' than 'positive' responses concerning the *relationship* between Top Management Teams and Workers. *Perceived purpose and role of government* is the third most supported *organisational factor impacting on customer focus*. The data suggests a diversity in meaning of the perceived *purpose and role of government*. *Staff/ comportment of our people, involvement and commitment, and management culture and role* are weakly represented throughout the data as *organisational factors which impact on customer focus*. *Structure* is the least represented factor.

APPENDIX 8

NUMBER OF INSTANCES (THOUGHT UNITS) COMPRISING CATEGORIES AND SUB CATEGORIES FROM BOTH THE TOP MANAGEMENT TEAM AND WORKER DATA.

Category	Sub category	Top Management Team data	Worker data
Structure of customer focus	Servicing	62	124
	Service types	86	208
	Standards/performance indicators	102	162
	Processes/systems/methods	199	152
	End result/outcomes	76	124
	Assessment of performance	97	271
Attitudes towards customers	Customer awareness	187	106
	Commitment to change	205	97
	Involvement	85	54
	Mindsets/attitudes	226	78
Customer understanding of ourselves as providers	Customer awareness	172	138
	Involvement	56	81
	Relationships	37	N/A
	Communication/relationships	N/A	23
Our understanding of ourselves as providers	Purpose/role	296	383
	Processes/systems/ methods	305	450
	Change	188	101
Elements which need to be balanced	Resources and role	38	N/A
	Words and actions	6	N/A
Perceptions of customer focus	Government customer focus program	96	74
	PSMO/Government/Minister	102	N/A
	Top Management Team	N/A	366
	Other agencies	25	N/A
Customer factors impacting on customer focus	Customer types	49	66
	Servicing relationship	6	N/A
	Customer behaviours/abilities	15	100
	Perceived customer status	50	13
	Service context/location	27	N/A
	Government factors	21	N/A
Finding out about customers	Communication/building relationships	58	27
	Processes/systems/methods	109	71
	Attitude/mindset	15	N/A

Category	Sub category	Top Management Team data	Worker data
Organisational factors impacting on customer focus	Resources and capacity	92	47
	Volunteers and guides	76	N/A
	Management culture and role	76	19
	Relationships	56	39
	Involvement and commitment	54	10
	Staff/comportment of our people	53	18
	Structure	20	4
	Perceived purpose-role of government	N/A	29